

A N
O R A T I O N,
Being an ENQUIRY

Whether the

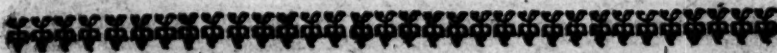
S T A G E

Is, or can be made a

S C H O O L

For forming the Mind to

V I R T U E.



1846

ORATION

Being an ENQUIRY

into the



ST. G. E.

Is, or can be made a

SCHEMATA

For forming the Mind to

VIRTU

A N
O R A T I O N,

In which an ENQUIRY is made

Whether the

S T A G E

Is, or can be made a

S C H O O L

For forming the Mind to

V I R T U E;

And proving the

Superiority of Theatric Instruction over those
of HISTORY and MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

With Reflections on OPERAS.

Spoke *March 13, 1733*, in the Jesuits College at
Paris, in Presence of the Cardinals *de Polignac*
and *de Bissy*, the Pope's *Nuncio*, and several
other Persons of the highest Distinction

By CHARLES PORÉE of the Society of Jesus,

Translated into English

By J. LOCKMAN.

L O N D O N,

Printed for C. DAVIS, and sold by T. ASTLEY at
the *Rose* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, MDCCXXXIV.

(Price One Shilling and Six-Pence.)

A N

ORATION

In which an ENQUIRY is made

Whether the

STAGE

is or can be made a

SCHOOL

Performing the duties

OF THE



And now

Superiority of Theatrical Education over that
of History and Moral Philosophy.

With Reflections on OPERA.

By the Author of the "Traveller's Companion,"
"The Poet's Pocket," and "The
Other's Pocket of the English Dramatist."

IN TWO VOLUMES, FOLIO, OF THE FIRST OF WHICH

Tranlated into French

BY J. B. COCKIN.

LONDON,

Printed by D. B. COCKIN, and sold by T. Agnew & Sons,
15, Old Bailey, (late 21, Strand).
(Price One Guinea, half bound.)

Alexander Pope Esq;

SIR,

INTENDING to publish the Translation of an excellent *Latin* Piece upon the Stage, I thought I could not address it any where with greater Propriety than to a Gentleman who has so eminently distinguished himself by his Poetical Compositions.

ON these Occasions, it is usual for Dedicators to enlarge on the Praises of

DEDICATION.

those to whom they inscribe their Writings; but as it would be impertinent in me to attempt any Thing of that Kind, I have no other Method to testify the great Veneration I have for You, than by embracing this Opportunity of testifying in Publick, that I am with the utmost Sincerity,

SIR,

Your much obliged, and

most Obedient Servant,

J. Lockman.

THE
PREFACE.

BEING conscious of my Incapacity, and how difficult it is to translate a Latin Oration with Accuracy and Elegance, 'tis with the utmost Diffidence that I venture the following English Sheets into the World. The Roman Language has so many Graces, is so masculine and nervous, and expresses Ideas in so short and comprehensive a Manner, that to convey them with any tolerable Justness and Delicacy, in a modern Tongue so much clogged with Particles as the English; is, I believe, no very easy Task.

The Original seemed to me to flow with so much Smoothness and Perspicuity, that I was betrayed into an Opinion I might render it in English
with

The PREFACE.

with the same Facility I read it. However, the Translation of a few Periods soon convinced me of the contrary, when finding it would be impossible for me to come near the Beauty and Spirit of the Latin, I was for that Reason induced to print the Original with my Translation, as the best Atonement I could make this eloquent Author for the Injury I have done him. This I mention, to prevent that from being imputed to me for Vanity; which arose intirely from a Desire of doing Justice.

A great many Discourses have been writ on the Stage, but no one, or I am mistaken, so much to the Purpose as that which I now present the Publick. Most of the Writers who employed their Pens on this Subject, were either Parties concerned, and consequently strongly prepossessed in Favour of the Drama; or if unconcerned, were so transported by Prejudices of another Kind, that they frequently overshot the Mark. Some of the former applauded the Theatre as a Place,

The PREFACE.

Place, in which the most chaste Persons might always appear without a Blush; whilst many of the latter degraded it to a Resort fit for none but the most profligate and abandoned. But the learned Author of the following Oration, tho' an Ecclesiastick, has observed a noble Impartiality on this Occasion; and far from condemning the Drama in General, proves it, when justly regulated, an Entertainment of the most rational Kind, and highly advantageous to the Publick.

I very probably may have made several Mistakes, and sometimes swelled to Justian: I can only say I have given as much Attention to this Translation as my Application to a very considerable Work would permit me, and I flatter my self that this will plead my Apology with the learned Reader.

Page 28, Line 30, for *Cass*, read *Cass*.

AN

THE PLACE
Place, in which the most illustrious Persons
might always be seated, without a Shift;
which many of the latter design'd to
a Room for some time the most pro-
pious and abundant. But the learn-
AN
ORATION,

IN WHICH

An ENQUIRY is made whether the

STAGE, &c.

MOST EMINENT CARDINALS,
MOST EXCELLENT NUNCIO, MOST
CONSPICUOUS PRINCES OF THE
CHURCH, MOST ILLUSTRIOUS
PRESIDENTS, MOST NOBLE SENATORS, AND
OTHER MOST HONOURABLE AUDITORS OF
ALL RANKS; The STAGE, which was in-
vented and designed as a kind of Mirrour for
Men to view themselves in, has always been
a Subject both of Curiosity and Dispute. E-
ver since the Dramatic Muse has exhibited in
Cities the Calamities and Follies of Mankind,
a great Number of Advocates have applaud-
ed, and many Censors have reproved Her.
Athens rais'd, at a prodigious Expence, pom-
pous and magnificent Theatres; and after-
wards

(5)

THEATRUM

SIT NE, VEL ESSE POSSIT

SCHOLA

Informandis MORIBUS Idonea.

THEATRUM, quod ad exhibendos homines hominibus, quasi speculum quoddam, inventum, atque comparatum est, magnum semper fuit ut invitamentum curiositatis, ita controversiæ argumentum, EMINENTISSIMI S. E. R. CARDINALES, EXCELLENTISSIME SEDIS APOSTOLICÆ NUNCIE, ILLUSTRISSIMI ECCLESIAE PRINCIPES, PRÆSIDES ILLUSTRISSIMI, AMPLISSIMI SENATORES, CETERIQUE OMNIUM ORDINUM AUDITORES ORNATISSIMI. Ex quo enim tempore Musa Dramatica humanas calamitates vel ineptias in lucem urbanam protulit, multos habuit suffragatores, qui plauderent; nec reprehensores paucos, qui reclamarent. Athenæ postquam Theatri magnificentiam immensis amplificaverunt sumptibus, ejus-

wards restrained, by the most severe Edicts, the great Detraction of the Theatric Muse. *Rome*, that jealous Rival of *Athens*, erected, at the Persuasion of the Censors, an august Theatre; and in a little Time, by the Advice of the Consuls, and with the Approbation of the Senate, suppressed it, and publickly sold off all its splendid Decorations. *France*, after after having attained to the Excellence of the *Athenian* Drama, and surpassed that of *Rome*, was very much divided in Opinion with Regard to its Merit; and has her self been frequently a Theatre of Controversy on that Account. She saw, in the last Century, a great Diversity of Opinions arise on this Head, between Men conspicuous for their Genius and Learning. With what Strength, with what Heat did they engage! Some wrote in Favour of the Stage, and supported it by a Multitude of Proofs; a great Number of Examples, and the Authority of the most venerable Names. Others opposed the Theatre with the Testimonies of the Fathers, the Decrees of Councils, the Censures of the Church; and hurled these sacred Javelins with a vigorous Hand; but the greatest Part of them were eluded by the sudden shifting of those against whom they were levelled, by which Means they fell on the petulant or superstitious Licentiousness of the antient Drama. The Combat grew fiercer; and most of the Reproaches which were cast on the antient

dem subinde maledicentiam edictis coercuerunt
 severissimis. Roma, quæ Athenas æmulata
 Theatrum excitavit superbissimum, ipsis adni-
 tentibus urbis Censoribus, mox idem sustulit,
 suadente Consule, approbante Senatu, & omnia
 ejus ornamenta hastæ subjecta vendidit. Gal-
 lia, quæ Atticam Theatri excellentiam attigit,
 Romanam superavit, in diversas quoque abiit
 de Theatro sententias: ipsaque facta est Thea-
 trum contentions super eâ re frequentissimum.
 Vidit illa, superiore seculo, exortam de hoc
 argumento magnam inter viros ingenio & do-
 ctrinâ conspicuos, discrepantiam opinionum.
 Quantis utrinque studiis & animis dimicatum
 est? Stabant alteri pro Theatro, & illud pro-
 bationum congerie, exemplorum numero, veren-
 dorum etiam nominum auctoritate muniebant.
 Pugnabant alteri contra Theatrum, & ipsum
 testimoniis Patrum, Decretis Conciliorum, Ec-
 clesiæ censuris impetebant. Validâ manu in-
 torquebantur tela ex sacro armamentario de-
 prompta; sed eludebantur pleraque levi decli-
 natione, & in petulantem, vel superstitiosam
 veteris Theatri licentiam detorquebantur. Re-
 crudefcebat pugna; & quæ opprobria in The-
 atrum vetus congesta fuerant, hæc ferme sin-

ent Theatre in general, were declared, in the most eloquent Expressions, applicable to the modern Stage. Nor was the Dispute carried on with less Fire and Animosity in private Companies than in Writing; and even the great Freedom that is allowed in the former, increased the Fury of the Engagement.

But what was the Success of it? That which is usually found in ambiguous Battles, when, right or wrong, the Combatants on each Side claim to themselves the Lawrel, or leave the Right to it doubtful. The Partizans of the Stage, a few excepted, though pierced with deep Wounds, yet refus'd to confess their Slaughter, because they remained Masters of the Field; whilst the Opponents of the Theatre, although superior in Arms, scarce dared to publish their Victory, because they were not able to rout their Adversaries, who were fortified by the public Authority. The only Advantage the most just Party gained, was to see their Antagonists remain in Possession of their Privileges, and to triumph in some Measure by their Defeat. Divines indeed still fulminate on the Stage from the Pulpit, but the Advocates of the latter persist in their Opinion, and defend it by Numbers.

In so pertinacious a Contrariety of Sentiments, what Character have I my self determined to take? That of a Mediator, and to offer some Things which may very near reconcile

cile

gula in novum aptè convenire disertissimis verbis pronunciabantur. Neque minùs in privatis colloquiis, quàm in scriptis publicis fervebat æstus dimicationis. Imò tanto ibi certabatur acriùs, quanto liberiùs.

Quis demum exitus pugnae fuit? Qui præliorum ancipitum esse solet, in quibus, (jure an injuriâ) palma utrinque vindicatur à dimicantibus, vel in dubio relinquitur. Theatri defensores, si paucos excipias, quàmvis gravibus confixi vulneribus, quia castris exuti non erant, de clade suâ confiteri noluerunt. Theatri impugnatores, licèt armis superiores, quia tamen adversarios auctoritate publicâ munitos non potuerunt movere loco, vix ausi sunt de suâ victoriâ prædicare. Sic itaque vicit causa melior, ut in possessione suâ permaneret deterior, & de meliore quodammodo triumpharet. Pergunt quidem sacri Oratores eloquio tonare de suggestu, & sua fulmina in Theatrales conventus extento brachio jaculari. Sed in suâ quoque sententiâ perseverant Theatri asseclæ, & illud densâ coronâ protegunt.

In tantâ, tam pertinaci opinionum discordiâ quid mihi hodierno die constitutum est? Conciliantis partes agere, & aliquid proponere, quo possint

cile the Lovers of Truth. For this Purpose I shall reduce the whole Controversy to two Heads, and enquire Whether the Stage is, or can be made a School proper for forming the Mind to Virtue. Which double Question I answer thus: It may be made such a School from its own Nature, but is not such a one by our Depravity. I therefore will examine, first, *what kind of School the Stage may be*; and secondly, *what kind of one it really is*. This Subject I shall treat, not as a Divine, whose Character I do not here assume; nor as a Censor, whose Authority I am not invested with; nor as a Philosopher, whose subtle Method of Reasoning is unsuitable to the present Discourse. But the Provinces I shall undertake will be these; of an Enquirer after Truth, which I earnestly pant after; of a Member of civil Society, whose Offices it becomes every one to maintain; and of a Christian, whose Duties no Man is allowed to neglect or abandon; ye Gentlemen that form my Audience, act as Judges on this Occasion, and weigh my Arguments with Equity and Prudence.

In this Assembly, among other illustrious Personages admirably well qualified to decide in Matters of Controversy are two Cardinals. The first a great Judge of every Species of Poetry, an excellent Poet, and a Vanquisher of the impious Tenets of * *Lucretius*. A Mem-

* Cardinal de *Polignac* has writ a beautiful *Latin* Poem against the Philosophy of *Lucretius*.

possint homines veritatis studiosi ad concordiam proximè adduci. Quod ut planius fiat, totam controversiam ad duo capita revoco, & quæro, Theatrum, sit ne, vel esse possit schola informandis moribus idonea. Sic autem geminæ quæstioni bipartitâ oratione respondeo. Theatrum, Schola informandis moribus idonea naturâ suâ esse potest; culpâ nostrâ, non est. Expendam igitur primùm qualem in Theatro Scholam habere possimus; deinde qualem habeamus. In utroque disceptationis capite versabor, non ut Theologus, cujus officium hîc non suscipio; non ut Censor, cujus auctoritatem non habeo; non ut Philosophus, cujus subtilitatem mea non recipit oratio. Sic tamen agam, ut veritatis indagator, cujus me cupidum esse sentio; ut civis, cujus munia ubique servare decet; ut Christianus, cujus officia nunquam licet deserre. Vos, Auditores, Judicum munus pro vestrâ æquitate & prudentiâ sustinete.

Adjunt qui vobis in judicando præeant idonei Controversiarum arbitri; inprimis duo Cardinales Eminentissimi; quorum alter universæ poëseos æstimator peritus, eximius idem poëta, & impietatis Lucretianæ debellator egregius,

om-

ber of all Academies, he bears their various Treasures in his capacious Mind: Employed frequently, with Dignity and Power, on the wide-extended Theatre of *Europe*; not as an idle Spectator, but worthy, from his majestic Aspect, his lofty Understanding, his sagacious Genius, his sweet Eloquence, of being himself a great, a pleasing Spectacle, to Nations, to Kings, to sovereign Pontiffs.

The † second Cardinal, who is fearful of being seen, nor desirous to see others, endeavours to conceal himself, but cannot. He would fly from the Light which his Learning diffuses, but shines whithersoever he directs his Steps. He combats the most subtle Adversaries of the Church, not with Craft, but with Fortitude: A more proper Judge of all Matters relating to Faith and Morality, as the utmost Simplicity of Manners, and the greatest Rectitude of Soul are visible in himself. Who therefore shall dare to oppose the Decision of such Judges? With Regard to my self, I declare openly, that whatever they shall determine in the present Controversy, I will acquiesce entirely with it.

† Cardinal *de Bissy*.

PART

nium socius *Academiarum*, omnes *Academicas* opes *fœcundo circumfert pectore*; *versatus frequentissime in amplissimo Europæ Theatro cum dignitate & potestate*; non *spectator otiosus*, sed *factus ipse suâ vultûs majestate, suâ mentis excelſitate, suâ ingenii dexteritate, suâ eloquentiæ suavitatem magnum & jucundum populis, Regibus, summisque Pontificibus spectaculum.*

Alter verò timidus spectari, nec spectare cupidus, latere vult, nec potest; lucem fugit quam suâ eruditione spargit, & ubique fulget; pugnat cum versutis Ecclesiæ hostibus, non astutiâ, sed fortitudine; tanto aptior ad judicandum de rebus sive ad fidem, sive ad mores pertinentibus, quanto simplicior ipse moribus, & animo candidior. Talium sententiis judicum quis refragari audeat? Ego quidem in præſenti controversiâ quidquid statuerint, id me toto amplecti animo, jam nunc apertè profiteor.

PRIMA

PART I.

WHAT are the Qualities required in that School which may be proper to improve the Mind in Virtue? To be furnished, if I mistake not, with Precepts and Examples calculated for that End. Are not Philosophy and History ranked in the Number of the most excellent Schools, merely because the former abounds with Precepts, the latter with Examples? Now from these two Heads, (Precept and Example) the Stage may be made a School proper to improve the Mind; and, in this double View, may contend for Pre-eminence with Philosophy and History; with Submission, however, I speak this, and with due Reverence to both those Branches of Literature.

With Regard to the School of Philosophy, especially that of the Antients, no one doubts but it abounds with moral Precepts. For as it considers Man in every kind of Life, that is, as alone or left to himself, as busied in his Family, or employed in public Affairs; and undertakes to instruct him in these three Stations, a spacious Field for Instruction must
certainly

PRIMA PARS.

SCHOLA informandis moribus idonea quænam intelligi debet? ea, ni fallor, quæ præceptis vel exemplis instructa sit idoneis. Quid enim est quod Philosophia, quid est quod Historia in Scholarum & quidem optimarum numero reponantur, nisi quòd altera det præcepta, altera verò exempla subministret? Sed utroque ex capite, ex præceptis nimirum & exemplis, Theatrum Schola fieri potest ad mores informandos idonea; & utroque nomine illud aio posse cum Philosophiâ & Historiâ, de Scholæ præstantiâ contendere. Quod tamen sine arrogantia dictum velim, & cum debitâ utrique disciplinæ reverentiâ.

De Philosophiæ Scholâ, præsertim veteri, nemo dubitat quin præceptis morum abundet. Cum enim spectet hominem in omni vitæ genere, hoc est, vel ut relictum sibi, vel ut occupatum domi, vel ut civilibus implicatum negotiis; atque ipsum in hoc triplici statu erudien-

dum

certainly by that Means be opened to the philosophic School?

But does not the Theatre open as large a one for Precept, since there is no Station of Life, whether of the most exalted, of a middle, or of the lowest Kind, but is or may be instructed by the Dramatic Muse in the Characters of Tragedy or Comedy? Is it not in this View that she summons Artificers from their Shops, Soldiers from the Camp, Traders from the *Exchange*, Judges from the Court, Courtiers from their Palaces, and Kings themselves from their Thrones?

Is there any Duty, whether of a private or public, of a domestic or civil Nature, which the Theatric Muse does not inculcate? Does she not point out the reciprocal Obligations of Parents and Children, of Masters and Servants, of Superiors and Dependants, of Magistrates and Citizens?

Is there any Species of Virtue she does not recommend, such as Patience in Adversity, Moderation in Prosperity, Exactness in Promises, Fidelity in Friendships, Clemency towards Enemies, Compassion to the Distressed, and Justice to all Men?

Is there any kind of Vice from which she does not deter us? Such as the Sordidness of Avarice, the excessive Squanderings of Prodigality, the sharp Stings of Calumny, the Snares of Adulation, the crafty Devices of Hypo-

dum suscipiat, amplius ei certè præcipiendi campus aperitur.

Verùm an minùs patet, qui datur in Theatro præceptioni locus? Est-ne aliqua humanæ vitæ conditio infima, media, summa, quam Theatrum voce Comædiæ vel Tragædiæ instruendam non assumat, vel possit assumere? Nonne ad hoc opifices ex officinis, Milites ex castris, Mercatores ex foro, Judices ex curiâ, Aulicos ex Regiâ, ipsos ex Aulâ Reges evocat?

Est-ne aliquod privatum vel publicum, domesticum vel civile officium, de quo non admoneat? Nonne indicat, quid parentes liberis, & liberi parentibus; quid servi dominis, & servis domini; quid clientes patronis, & patroni clientibus; quid cives magistratibus, & civibus invicem magistratus debeant?

Est-ne aliquod virtutis genus, quod non sua-deat? Nonne patientiam in adversis, modestiam in prosperis, constantiam in promissis, fidem in amicitiiis, clementiam erga inimicos, misericordiam erga ærumnosos, æquitatem erga universos commendat?

Est-ne aliqua vitii species, à quâ non absterreat? Nonne avaritiæ sordes, prodigentiæ largitiones, maledicentiæ aculeos, adulationis

Hypocrisy, and the Folly of ostentatious Vanity?

Does she not reform every Depravity in the whole Round of Morals? If any one is churlish in Society, obscene in his Expressions, clownish in his Actions, affected in his Dress; behaves indecently or with an ill Grace in any Station, the dramatic Muse re-proves and punishes him for it. Philosophy indeed thinks this Office beneath her, and censures such Improprieties only as border upon Vice; but the School of the Stage goes farther, and does not wink at any Irregularity that ought to be reprov'd; it not only keeps Men from being wicked, but will not allow them even to be ridiculous.

This opens to our View a vast Field for Theatric Instruction. But whence are the Precepts suitable to that Purpose taken? From three Springs. First, from the Follies of Mankind, which is a very copious one. You no doubt wonder, how any Thing salubrious can flow from so muddy a Source; but 'tis well known that the most excellent Antidotes are drawn from the most poisonous Juices. Thus the Dramatic Poet extracts from the stupid Follies of Mankind, a very sharp and witty Ridicule, which is found the most powerful Remedy against Follies of every Kind.

laqueos, simulationis fallacias, ostentationis ineptias reprehendit?

Est-ne aliqua in moribus universis pravitas, quam non emendet? Si quid in convictu asperum, in sermone putidum, in cultu agreste, in vestitu abnorme, si quid in aliquâ vitæ parte indecens, & invenustum, nonne id totum improbat & castigat? Ista quidem observare vel notare non dignatur Philosophia, quæ in moribus nihil arguit, nisi quod affine culpæ sit: sed Theatri Schola ulterius progreditur; nihil dissimulat, quod sit quoquo modo animadversione dignum; neque id solum cavet, ne homo improbus sit, sed etiam ne impune sit inficetus.

Videtis, Auditores, quanta se aperiat in Theatro præcipiendi materia: at unde præcepta sumentur idonea? Ex triplici fonte. Ex humanâ primùm stultitiâ, qui fons est multò uberrimus. Admiramini, credo, ex scatebrâ tam lutulentâ quid possit salubritatis accipi? Quod ex ipsis accipitur venenorum succis, qui contra morsus veneniferos antidotum quandoque sufficiunt præsentissimum. Nam ex insulsi hominum fatuorum ineptiis, Poëta dramaticus ridiculum exprimere potest salissimum, quo nullum sit remedium adversus fatuitatem potentius.

However, the judicious Poet shall not confine himself wholly to the facetious Source of Ridicule, but go up to the limpid Streams of human Wisdom, where he shall drink as copiously as at the Fountain of *Aganippe*. From the former he shall draw a Liquor, efficacious in extinguishing the Fire of the Passions, and in purging the Blemishes and Vices of the Soul.

But why may not the dramatic Poet advance to the Fountain of divine Wisdom, since this also is open to him? He is allowed to go thither and draw Precepts from thence, provided he does it sparingly and with Awe. As in some Medicines, Gold is employed seldom and with a parsimonious Hand; so the sacred Treasures must be used rarely and with Reverence in theatric Performances, unless the Inveteracy of the Disease may require otherwise, or the Subject of the Drama is borrowed from the Scriptures. For when a Love for Piety or a Hatred of Impiety are to be inculcated, no one will doubt but that the sacred Fountain may be opened wide, and that Souls may be plentifully watered with its celestial Streams.

We have now discovered the Subjects and Sources of theatric Instruction, so that there remains only to find a proper Method of conveying it. But why do I say find it? 'Tis already found. This Method indeed, so far from resembling that employed by Philosophers

Neque tamen in faceto ridiculi fonte hærebit Poëta prudens; accedet ad limpida humanæ sapientiæ fluentia. His labra non minùs proluet, quàm liquore Aganippæo. Inde hauriet latices ad restinguenda cupiditatum incendia, & ad purganda animi vitia efficaces.

Quidni autem se conferat ad ipsum divinæ sapientiæ fontem? Nam hic quoque dramatico Poëtæ apertus est. Parciùs ex eo quidem ac reverentiùs præcepta depromet. Ut enim in medicamentis quibusdam auri usus est, sed rarus & modicus: ita sacrarum opum usura in documentis Theatri moralibus verecunda sit oportet, atque infrequens. Nisi forte aliter suadeat gravitas morbi, vel argumenti sanctitas. Tunc enim ad instillandum pietatis studium, vel odium impietatis, quis dubitet penitus recludere divinæ sapientiæ fontem, & pectora rore sacro plenius irrigare?

Hactenus in Theatro reperimus præceptionum argumenta & fontes: sequitur, & superest, ut reperiamus idoneum præcipiendi modum. Quid autem reperiendum esse dico? Jam repertus est. Non ille quidem proprius Philo-

phers, differs widely from it; but then 'tis equally well adapted to reform our Manners, and suited to the various Complexions and Dispositions of the Pupils.

Methinks I hear some Philosopher crying out, Gods! Shall Philosophy and Philosophers suffer so great an Insult! Shall a ludicrous Art be put in Parallel with a grave, majestic Science! But O wise Man, whosoever you be, I intreat you to cease your exclamatory Censures. I have as high a Veneration as you can possibly entertain for Philosophers, the Science they cultivate, and their Method of inculcating it. What I request of you is, not to have so strong a Contempt for the dramatic Way of Instruction, nor to prefer your own so infinitely before it. Either compare them one with the other in your own Mind, or suffer me to do this publicly.

You instruct us in Morality, as such, and make an open Profession of teaching it. This I applaud, for your Science is a very noble one. But does the dramatic Poet accommodate himself less aptly to our Dispositions and Infirmities, who, not mentioning the Names of Master and Precept, fashions our Manners in a hidden, artful Way. We are like Children; such of us as labour under any Indisposition of Mind, must be insidiously prevailed upon to take the salutiferous Potion; and its very Name must be concealed, lest

we

tophorum, imò diversus maximè; sed non minus ad morum disciplinam, & ad discipulorum indolem accommodatus.

O superi! exclamabit hîc, opinor, Philosophus aliquis. Tantamne Philosophis & Philosophiæ imponi contumeliam, ut ludicra præcipiendi ratio cum gravissimâ docendi methodo in contentionem adducatur? Noli, quæso, reclamare, vir sapiens, quisquis es. Ego tanti Philosophiam, & Philosophos, ipsamque Philosophicam docendi methodum facio, quanti tu ipse facis. Peto à te cum bonâ veniâ ne scenicam præcipiendi rationem tantoperè despicias; neve tuam tanto anteponas intervallo. Confer utramque tacitus, vel à me palàm conferri finito.

Tu nos de moribus doces apertè, & cum apertâ docendi professione. Laudo; nam egregiam artem profiteris. Verùm an minus convenienter ad hominum indolem & infirmitatem facit Poëta dramaticus, qui nostros mores erudit occultè, dissimulanter, omisso præceptoris & præceptionis nomine? Sumus enim puerorum similes, quotquot animo ægrotamus, fallendi sumus, cum nobis porrigitur medicina; ipsumque potionis

we should loath what is so conducive to our Welfare.

You teach with an Air of Warmth and Obstinacy, and endeavour to force an Assent, by Arguments, even from those who resist you: This I don't disapprove. You fight in the Cause of Truth and Virtue, both which ought to attract the Willing, or force the Unwilling. But does not the theatric Poet effect this as judiciously, who wins us over to Truth and Virtue, not by Violence, but by the most soothing Arts? We are jealous of our Liberties, and would be allured into a Compliance, not have it extorted from us?

You chastise severely our various unruly Passions, and with great Justice, they not deserving the least Connivance or Indulgence: But is the tragic Poet less sagacious, when he reforms with Tenderness and Humanity, and bewails the Maladies of our Souls? 'Tis with Difficulty that we are cured; and we desire to be under the Hands of Physicians who not only know, but are intimately sensible, that they have to do with Men.

You censure our wild Frenzies with Anger and Indignation. This I don't wonder at, for who can suffer them with any Patience? But is the comic Poet less artful, when he rebukes with a Smile, and corrects with a facetious Stroke? Such is the Nature of most Men, they laugh at and despise Anger, but are afraid of being the Object of Ridicule.

You

medicata nomen dissimulandum est, ne, quod prodest, abhorreamus.

Tu nos docēs pugnaciter, & argumentando conaris assensum ab invitis quoque & reluctantibus extorquere. Non improbo. Pugnas pro veritate, & virtute: utraque animos debet volentes, nolentes ad se pertrahere. Verum an minūs sapienter Theatralis Poëta, qui nos ad veritatem & virtutem trahit, alliciendo, non evincendo? Sumus enim libertatis retinentes, invitari malumus, quàm expugnari.

Tu nostras cupiditates castigas severè, & meritò quidem; nam illæ sunt indulgentiâ prorsus indignæ. Verum an minūs sagaciter Poëta Tragicus, qui nos emendat humaniter, & nostris indolet animi morbis? Sumus enim curatu difficiles, medicos volumus, qui nos sciunt esse homines, & se cum hominibus agere sentiant.

Tu insaniam nostram stomachosè increpas, & cum indignatione. Non miror. Quis enim stoliditatem nostram patienter ferat? Verum an minūs calidè Poëta Comicus, qui nos arguit jocosè, & ridendo corripit? Sic enim sumus plerique omnes, iracundiam ridemus, irrisionem reformidamus.

Tu

You dispute very copiously on our Duties, which I no Ways discommend. The Method you follow of proposing, confirming, and refuting, must necessarily make you diffusive. But has the theatric Writer less Authority because he argues generally with Conciseness, and frequently comprizes a noble, sublime Instruction in a single Line? We are fond of Brevity; and love to imbibe a Variety of Knowledge, but in the fewest Words.

You reason with great Subtilty on the Impulses and Affections of the Soul, but commonly in a dry jejune Manner, which, however, I don't blame. 'Tis your Province to define, to divide, to proceed Step by Step, not to strike the Mind, or move the Passions. But does our Poet act with less Dignity when he grieves, rages, terrifies and pities? Man consists of Body and Soul; we will be instructed and moved, and are not sufficiently instructed unless we are moved.

Lastly, you confine your self wholly to Precept, and never meddle with Example. This I don't accuse, since you propose no more. But has not the dramatic Poet manifestly the Advantage over you, when he instructs both by Precept and Example? The Poet is, on this Occasion, not only a Philosopher, but likewise an Historian, and thus opens a third kind of School, admirably well calculated, both to instruct and to raise the Passions.

'Tis

Tu de officiis nostris disputas verbosè. Non vitupero. Eam sequeris disciplinam, quæ proponendo, confirmando, refellendo, te faciat necessariò verbum. Verùm an minùs commodè Poëta scenicus, qui differit breviter plerumque; & magnum sæpe documentum unâ claudit sententiâ. Sumus amantes brevitatis; doceri multa volumus, sed paucis.

Tu de motibus animi subtiliter philosopharis, sed exiliter plerumque & siccè. Non reprehendo. Definire, dividere, articulatim dicere tuum est, non movere. Verùm an minùs congruenter Poëta noster, qui dolet, irascitur, terret, deprecatur? Mente constamus & animo. Doceri volumus & moveri: neque docemur satis, nisi moveamur.

Tu denique in præceptis totus es; nihil das exemplis. Non culpo. Præcipere tui muneris est, non exempla subicere. At quantò meliùs Poëta dramaticus, qui & præceptis instruit & exemplis? In quo non jam cum Philosophiâ, sed cum Historiâ convenit; & alteram quasi Scholam aperit tum ad erudiendum, tum ad movendum peridoneam,

Notum

'Tis a well known Saying of *Seneca*, *The Path by Precept is long, but that by Example is short and efficacious.* And indeed when we read of a laudable Action performed by one of our Fellow Creatures, we immediately know 'tis possible, and are strongly prompted to imitate it, in case it be judged expedient. Hence History is called by *Tully* the *Mistress of Life*; for though she does not furnish Precepts, she yet teaches Men to fashion their Lives by the Voice of Example, and guides them in Safety. But in Case you doubt whether the dramatic Muse, may, in this Respect, be set in Competition with History, tell me only any Species of Example that the latter commits to Writing, which the former cannot represent on the Stage?

Are you desirous of noble, illustrious Examples, whose Splendor may dart upon, and enlighten the Mind? These must first be selected. Now History, so far from selecting always, generally employs such as Chance brings in her Way. But the theatric Muse admits of excellent, illustrious Examples only, these being all chosen, and her Choice is ever directed by Prudence.

Are you for Examples whose Dignity and Importance may be such as to impress strongly on the Mind? History furnishes us some in this Case, but then she generally intermixes inconsiderable Events with those of the noblest Kind, lest any Omission should be imputed to

Notum illud Senecæ, longum iter per præcepta; breve & efficax per exempla. Nimirum quod ab homine factum esse legimus, id continuò posse intelligimus fieri; & ad faciendum, si expediat, validè incitatur. Hinc Tullio Historia dicta est magistra vitæ, quòd licet ipsa præcipiat nihil, exempli voce hominum vitam erudiat, tutòque dirigat. Quà laude an possit Theatrum cum Historiâ certare si fortè ambigitis, dicite quodnam exemplorum genus altera legentibus offerat, quod non possit alterum spectantibus exhibere?

Exempla vultis eximia & illustria, quæ suo nitore menti præluceant? Ut habeantur, eligenda sunt. Sed Historia non semper eligit. Hæc recipit fermè, quæ fortuna obtulit. Musa dramatica nullum admittit exemplum nisi eximium & illustre, quia nullum sine delectu; & omnia dace prudentiâ eligit.

Exempla optatis gravia, quæ suo pondere in animos pervadant? Historia quandoque dabit: sed levia plerumque miscebit gravibus, ne quid
 per

to her for Negligence. Now the dramatic Muse exhibits such important Subjects only as she has duly examined: She passes over Things of a trivial Nature, and her Conduct on this Occasion is the Effect of Judgment.

Do you require laudable Examples, which by rewarding Virtue and by punishing Vice, may invite to the one, and deter from the other? History will always wish for such, and yet she often exhibits, but very much against her Will, those of a contrary Character. She frequently is obliged to paint Virtue in the deepest Distress, and Vice happy and triumphant. Morality indeed would willingly have this otherwise, but historical Fidelity forces it to be so. Now the theatric Muse proposes nothing but what may be of Advantage to Mankind: If she has put Virtue to a severe Trial during the Course of the Play, 'tis crowned in the End: On the contrary, if she has indulged a happy Progress to Vice, 'tis punished in the Catastrophe. This is necessary for the Sake of Example, and at the same Time consistent with the Liberties of the Drama.

Would you have Examples which may not only be exquisite in themselves, but also proposed in the most exquisite Manner, and set in so beautiful a Light, that they may both dazzle and move: On this Occasion the dramatic Muse triumphs in some Measure, and greatly surpasses History.

For

*per incuriam videatur prætermittere. Musa
dramatica nihil offeret nisi probati ponderis:
levia negliget, & per diligentiam præteri-
bit.*

*Exempla desideratis proba, quæ virtutem
munerando, vitium puniendo, invitent ad al-
teram, & ab altero deterreant? Talia sem-
per optabit Historia; sed contraria non rarò
suggeret, vel invita. Sæpè virtutes ærum-
nosas, sæpè crimina felicia, cogetur exponere.
Aliud quidem postulat boni exempli ratio;
sed hoc flagitat narrationis historicæ fides.
Musa drammatica nihil proponet nisi salubre.
Si virtutem exercuerit in dramatis cursu, co-
ronabit in exitu: si contra vitio lætum de-
derit cursum, dabit tristem exitum. Hoc pe-
tit exempli utilitas & patitur poëseos drama-
ticæ libertas.*

*Exempla poscitis non solum per se optima,
sed etiam proposita optimè & in optimo lu-
mine collocata; quæ luceant simul & mo-
veant. Hic verò triumphat quodammodo
Musa drammatica; & Historiam longè supe-
rat.*

Si

For if certain Examples diffuse some Lustre when only read in the Closet, and presented to the Eye, unadorned, without colouring, and in no other Dress than that of Words; how much greater is their Splendor when viewed in the refulgent Light of the Stage, and represented by Actors cloathed in rich Habits suitable to their Character, surrounded with their *Insignia*; and all this in a Theatre embellished with the utmost Pomp of Decoration!

If Examples have some Force and Life, when trusted to inanimate Paper, and comprized in dumb, or silently-talkative Letters; how much greater must their Vigour be, when they live in Players, are moved, and speak, in the most lofty Sentiments, with a sonorous Voice, and all the Eloquence of Action! In this Manner is every Thing exhibited on the Stage. There the several Objects are so exactly portray'd, that Imitation frequently surpasses Reality. The Spectator imagines, that a Series of Ages having revolved back, and the distance of Places being contracted, he is suddenly conveyed into those Places and Ages in which the Subject of the Drama happened: Or else, that, past Times being renewed, the Subject is again acted in his Presence.

You don't on these Occasions, read silently in a Closet or Library, the illustrious Acts of antient Heroes, who have immortalized themselves by the Love they displayed for their Country,

Si quid enim splendoris habent exempla quædam, vel cum leguntur in umbrâ domesticâ, & subjiciuntur oculis nuda, sine colore, sine ornatu, solis vestita verbis; quanto plus habent fulgoris cum spectantur in luce Theatri clarissimâ, & offeruntur in Actorum personâ suis induta vestibus, suis distincta coloribus, suis ornata insignibus, cum magnificentissimo scenæ apparatu?

Si quid habent vitæ exempla quæpiam, vel cum inanimis sunt commissa chartis, & affixa literis mutis, vel loquacibus sine sono; quanto plus habent animæ, cum vivunt in Actoribus, cum moventur, cum loquuntur, elato spiritu, sonora voce, & eloquente gestu? Talia enim exhibentur in scenâ. Ibi omnia sic exprimuntur ad vivum, ut ipsam sæpè vincat imitatio veritatem. Credas revoluto seculorum ordine, & contracto locorum spatio, te repentè in ea translatum esse loca, & tempora, ubi res quæque acta est: aut renovatâ mundi scenâ rem ipsam renovari coram te; & denuo peragi.

Non jam tibi leguntur in Musæo, aut aliquo Bibliothecæ angulo egregia priscorum Heroum facinora, quos suus in patriam, in pa-
rentes,

Country, their Parents, their Children, their Wives, their Brothers and their Friends. These wonderful Men are called from their Sepulchres where they had so long flumbered, appear again in the World, and you behold their generous, their pious Strife. Again they devote themselves to Death for their Country, their Parents, their Children and their Wives. Again the Brother contests with his Brother, the Friend with his Friend; not whether he shall live, but whether he shall die, and generously preserve the Life of the other, by gloriously sacrificing his own.

You don't now peruse in Martyrologies, the noble Struggles of Christians of both Sexes and all Ages for their Faith and Religion. You see, you hear sanguinary Tyrants venting terrible, but at the same Time, ineffectual Menaces: Parents in the deepest Affliction for their Children, beseech, but their Intreaties are vain: Wives, trembling and in Tears, bewail their Husbands, but weep to no Purpose; Life with its most delicious Enjoyments is offered, and refused with a beautiful Pride: Death with attendant Torments is threatened, and contemplated with a steady, intrepid Eye: The dreadful Sentence being pronounced, is received with Thanks: The Executioner delaying the impending Stroke, the Sufferer rises up to meet it.

You

rentes, in liberos, in conjuges, in fratres, in
 amicos amor nobilitavit. Tuis obversantur
 oculis Heroës isti, tanto post tempore excitati
 è tumulto, & ad lucem revocati. Vides pias
 & generosas eorum contentiones. Iterum se
 neci devovent pro patriâ, pro parentibus, pro
 liberis, pro conjugibus. Iterum cum fratre
 frater, amicus cum amico certat, non uter
 vivat, sed uter moriatur & vitam alterius
 vicariâ morte redimat.

Non jam tibi recitantur de codice scripto
 fortissima Christianorum omnis sexûs & ætatis
 pro Fide & Religione certamina. Te intu-
 ente vultus, te audiente voces, truculenti mi-
 nantur tyranni; & perdunt minas: orant
 mæsti parentes; & pereunt preces: flent tre-
 pidæ sponsæ; nec lacrymæ proficiunt: offer-
 tur vita cum deliciis; & pulchro fastu re-
 pudiat: proponitur mors cum tormentis; &
 oculo irretorto conspicitur: pronuntiatur sen-
 tentia capitis; & cum actione gratiarum ac-
 cipitur: moratur carnificis gladius; & mo-
 ranti occurritur.

You don't now run over, in the various Monuments of Literature, the mournful End, the dreadful Punishment of Parricides; of impious, incestuous, trayterous and sanguinary Men. Illustrious Criminals now appear before you in as strong, or rather more conspicuous Light, than when they were living. They turn pale, they shudder, they rave, they burn in your Presence. Before you they are punished, or take Vengeance on themselves; are struck blind, or thrust through with Swords; are tormented with the flaming Brands of the Furies, that is, tortured by the insupportable Stings of Conscience. What can more effectually dissuade Men from Vice, or excite in them a Love for Virtue, than such Examples, set in the Light we have here represented them?

Virtues are usually exhibited apart from Vices, and Vices from Virtues in History, which relates the several Incidents distinctly, and in the Order, Place and Time they happened; but both are opposed in the same *Drama*, in like Manner as Colours are reciprocally contrasted in Painting. By this Means the Valiant and the Cowardly, the Mild and the Fiery, the Modest and the Haughty, the Niggard and the Squanderer, the Man of Honour and the Villain are seen together in strong Opposition; hence, how bright a Splendor must necessarily be diffused

Non jam tibi percurruntur in variis literarum monumentis impiorum hominum parricidarum, incestorum, proditorum, perduellium ferales exitus & horrenda supplicia. Ad-sunt tibi facinorosi & illustres rei, quales olim fuerunt in vivis conspicui, aut etiam magis, quàm fuerant aspectabiles. Coram te ardent, furunt, pallent, fremunt. In tuo conspectu dant scelerum pœnas, vel sumunt ipsi de se, orbatî oculis, confossi gladiis, aut vexati tædis Furiarum ardentibus; id est, acerbissimis conscientiae stimulis excarnificati. Talibus exemplis in tali positis luce, quid horribilius ad vitii fugam? Quid ad virtutis amorem illecebrosum?

Quid quod non virtutes seorsum à vitiis, aut vitia separatim à virtutibus proponuntur, ut vulgò accidit in Historiâ, quæ res singulas eo singulatim narrat ordine, loco, & tempore quo eveniunt? sed altera opponuntur alteris in eodem dramate, quomodo fit in picturâ quæ colores opponit coloribus. Atque ita simul oppositi conspiciuntur fortes cum ignavis, placidi cum iracundis, modesti cum arrogantibus, liberales cum avaris, frugales cum decoctoribus, boni cum sceleratis. Ex quo mutuo

led on Virtue, how thick a Cloud must be cast over Vice!

Whether Examples are most capable of moving, when represented on the Stage or related in History, let the Readers and Spectators declare. Let historical Books, let Theatres bear Witness, which of them draws the greatest Abundance of Tears.

Shall any one, after this, be so suspicious or fearful, as to accuse me of Temerity, for presuming to enquire whether the Stage may become a School proper to form the Mind, since two different Schools (those of Precept and Example) with a proper Method of inculcating both, are united in this Theatre. Should I not rather be accused of Diffidence, for even doubting a Circumstance which is manifest not only from the Nature of the Stage, but even proved from the Confession both of Philosophy and History?

What could induce *Socrates*, who by the Oracle, that is the Voice of the People was pronounced the wisest Man, to be so often a Spectator

conspicui & obiectu reciproco, quantum lucis in virtutem, quantum caliginis in vitium refundi necesse est?

Utra porro exempla magis valeant ad movendum, an proposita scenice, an historice narrata, testificentur nobis, qui & altera legunt in libris, & altera spectant in Theatris. Sint testes ipsi codices historici, qui tam raro bibunt legentium lacrymas; sit ipsa testis arena amphitheatralis, quæ tam crebro spectantium fletibus immadescit.

Et erunt nunc etiam suspicaces, vel meticulosi homines, qui me temeritatis arguant, quod sim ausus quærere Theatrum possit-ne fieri Schola informandis moribus idonea; in quo Theatro hæc reperimus conjuncta duo, quæ sejuncta Scholam duplicem efficiant, præcepta nimirum & exempla, cum idoneo præcipiendi & proponendi modo? Non ego potius diffidentiae sim accusandus, qui dubitanter illud videar in quæstionem adducere, quod non solum patet ex Theatri naturâ, sed etiam quod ipsâ Philosophiâ judice, & Historiâ teste comprobatum est?

Quid enim fuit, quod ille oraculi voce, id est, populi suffragio, sapientissimus declaratus

Spectator of *Euripides's* Tragedies? Did he not go purely to hear the Precepts he delivered to his Disciples repeated by the Actors, or to learn others from them?

What prompted the most sagacious Philosopher that ever lived, *Aristotle*, to write so accurately on the Drama? Merely this Consideration, that as he had founded, on the strongest Principles, a philosophic School in the *Lyceum*, he also might establish a theatric School, on the noblest and most inviolable Laws.

To omit profane Examples and Testimonies; what could induce that learned and excellent Prelate the Archbishop of *Milan**, so eminent for the Severity of his Life and the Sanctity of his Doctrine, to correct such Pieces as were designed for the Stage? This Motive only, that he believed the Theatre, if duly purged, would contribute greatly to the Reformation of Manners.

What could engage the prime Minister under † *Lewis* the XIIIth, a Statesman whose intellectual Perfections raised him as much above other Men, as his Authority; to employ, as we are told, that Pen which determined the Fate of *Europe* in writing of tragic Verses; and to extend his mighty Cares of the State, of the Church, and of War, to

* *Charles Borromeo.*

† *Cardinal Richelieu.*

Socrates ad Theatrum Euripidis sederet frequens; nisi ut ibi, vel recognosceret præcepta, quæ tradebat discipulis, vel tradenda exciperet?

Quid fuit, quòd ille Philosophorum subtilissimus Aristoteles de Poësi dramaticâ accuratissimè scribendum susciperet? Nisi, ut qui Scholam in Lycæo habebat validis fundatam principiis, alteram in Theatro constitutam, optimis legibus stabiliret.

Quid erat (ut antiquiora & profana omit- tam testimonia vel exempla) quòd ille severâ tum vitæ tum doctrinæ sanctitate commenda- tissimus Mediolanensium Archiepiscopus ingeni- um & calamum dispungendis operibus drama- ticis adhiberet; nisi quòd illa ritè purgata verti posse crederet ad publicam morum salu- britatem?

*Quid erat causæ cur ille Régni Gallici sub Ludovico Justo administer, mente supra ho- minem, auctoritate supra civem erectus, ma- num illam Europæ moderatricem admoveret carminibus tragicis (si fas est credere) & quas rei civili, quas rei Ecclesiasticæ, quas rei bellicæ, has quoque rei dramaticæ curas
divi-*

the Drama? Did he who had exhibited such glorious Spectacles to the whole Earth, do this merely in the Design of amusing the *French* with theatrical Shews? No; the Views of his exalted Genius were far different. As he had founded, with an almost royal Munificence, a Seat for the sacred Sciences; as he had established the *French Academy* under the glorious Protection of the Monarch, he also desired to raise and embellish a noble School, for improving the Minds of Subjects and of Kings, by Examples suited to both.

What prompted thee, immortal * *Lewis*, to command that other † Glory of the *Gallic* Stage to resume the Buskin, and compose Tragedies in Order to their being represented by young Ladies of Quality? Was it merely in the Design of amusing Children with Diversions adapted to their Age? No, most beneficent, most wise, most religious Monarch, you had a far more nobler Object in View. Tender Virgins of exalted Birth, but unblest with the Smiles of Fortune, were, by your royal Indulgence, furnished with Precepts and Examples of Piety; in order that they might carry these, as the richest Portions, into Families of the highest Distinction. And this great tragic Poet wrote such nobly virtuous Pieces, that, were the like always exhibited, we should not now enquire

* The XIVth.

† Racine.

whether

Aluideret? An ut daret Galliae ludos, qui tam stupenda orbi terrarum spectacula ediderat? Aliud profecto cogitabat vir consilii plenus. Qui domicilium sacris disciplinis regia munificentia posuerat, qui Academiam Gallicam regio patrocinio firmaverat, is quodque ad informandos regum & civium animos Scholam exemplis regis & civilibus instructissimam voluit adornare.

Quæ te causa, Ludovice Magne, impulit, ut ab otio ad laborem revocares alterum illum cothurni Gallici Principem, & ab eo Tragædias puellis nobilibus agendas extunderes? An puerilia ætati puerili oblectamenta comparabas? Aliud tertè animoolvebas, Rex beneficentissime, sapientissime, religiosissime. Tenebris virginibus malè dotatis à fortunâ providebas exempla pietatis & præcepta, quæ in clarissimas deinde familias, pro amplissimâ dote comportarent. Et illa quidem à solertissimo Tragædiarum artifice dramata impetrâsti, quibus si paria vel similia semper exhiberentur,

whether the Theatre might be a School for improving of Morality, but whether it can possibly be of Prejudice to it.

Let us proceed further, and not abandon, out of false Modesty, the Cause of the *Drama*, in Presence of so illustrious an Assembly. On what Motives, I beseech ye, do so many Professors in *France, Italy, Spain, Germany* and other Countries erect Theatres in their Colleges, for the exercising their Pupils in dramatic Representations? With what Design are they so laborious on these Occasions? Merely to give Sweetness to the Voice, Elegance to the Gesture, Dignity to the Gait, Decency and Grace to the whole Person? No: Professors, indeed, don't condemn these Advantages they so assiduously procure to Youth, and which are of such frequent, such important Use to them in real Life; but then they have a much nobler Aim. They take their Pupils out of the humble, obscure, School of Literature, and convey them to the shining sublime one of the Stage, in order that such of them as are one Day to act in conspicuous Characters on the Theatre of publick Affairs, may imbibe early an Aversion to, or Love for, the Things they see ridiculed or applauded in their private Theatres.

Whether

tur, non jam quærendum foret de Theatrali Scholâ, possit ne fieri ad morum disciplinam utilis, sed an possit esse bonis moribus exitiosa.

Pergamus ultra, neque committamus in tam celebri cætu, ut Theatri causam pudore malo deferamus. Quorsum amabo vos, in Galliâ, in Italiâ, in Hispaniâ, in Germaniâ, & alibi gentium, tot Viri Academiis literariis præpositi, Theatra in Gymnasiis erigunt ubi juvenus Academica recitandis Tragædiis vel Comædiis exerceatur? Quod pertinet eorum labor & industria? An id student unum, ut puerorum fingant vocem ad suavitatem, gestum ad elegantiam, incessum ad dignitatem, totum corporis habitum ad concinnitatem & decentiam? Non aspernantur quidem istum exercitationis laboriosæ fructum, cujus patet usus in totam vitam frequentissimus: sed aliud spectant operæ suæ pretium multò pluris æstimabile. Trajiciunt discipulos ex humili & obscurâ literarum Scholâ, in Scholam Theatri sublimem & splendidam, ut juvenes magnas olim in Republicâ personas acturi discant maturè ea spernere vel amare quæ in scenâ domesticâ risu vel plausu excipi viderint.

Utrum

Whether those who superintend the Education of Youth, affect what they so strenuously labour at, is not my Business to say. Let the distinguished Spectators of all Ranks pronounce, they who are not displeased to honour these Spectacles with their Presence, are not tired with seeing and hearing, almost infantine Actors, playing in borrowed Characters; are not ashamed to laugh, to weep, with those that laugh or weep; and to learn, if 'tis possible for them to want Instruction of any kind, with Learners. At least they cannot but applaud the Skill of the Preceptor, who by so happy, so delightful a Method enlightens the Minds of his Pupils, and endeavours to make juvenile Diversions of Advantage to their Morals. These Spectators would doubtless not applaud, were they not persuaded that the Thing is really feasible. Since nothing can be more imprudent than to attempt Impossibilities, or to praise fruitless Endeavours.

I presume every one will now agree with me, that the Theatre, in which Tragedy and Comedy are represented, may be made a School proper for fashioning and improving the Mind: But, I believe, it is doubted whether the same may be justly asserted of the harmonious lyric * Theatre, in which a Spectacle of a modern and very singular Kind, and formed from a Multitude of other Specta-

* The Opera.

Utrum id assequantur juventutis moderato-
res quod tanta contentione & animi & corpo-
ris consecrantur, dicere non est meum. Di-
cant, si lubet, spectatores ex omni ordine lec-
tissimi, quos non piget ad ejusmodi Theatra
convenire; quos non tædet oculos & aures Ac-
toribus pusillis ac propè infantibus commoda-
re; quos non pudet ridere cum ridentibus;
flere cum flentibus; & cum discentibus (si quid
nescirent) discere. Laudant certè Magistro-
rum solertiam, qui alumnos doceant oblectando,
& ludos juveniles conentur ad morum disci-
plinam traducere. Atqui non laudarent pro-
fectò, nisi traduci posse crederent. Nam ne-
que prudentis est vana conari, neque vanos
conatus laudare sapientis.

De Theatro ad exhibendas Tragædias vel
Comædias erecto jam mihi, opinor, illud fa-
cile assentiuntur omnes, posse in eo Scholam in-
formandis moribus idoneam consistere. At du-
bitatur etiamnum, credo, eadem-ne sit ratio
hujus Theatri canori & lyrici, in quo datur
spectaculum haud ita pridem inventum, &
omnino singulare; quod quidem ex multis con-
flatum

cles, is exhibited. Sprung from the *Greek Tragedy*, it retains scarce the least Resemblance of its Original: So wild is its Assemblage, that it ought to be considered, when compared to regular dramatic Pieces, as of the monstrous Kind; and indeed what shews it to be allied to those extraordinary Productions, is, its exciting so great a Curiosity, its raising our Wonder more than the genuine Works of Nature, and its being worthy of Admiration rather than of true Praise.

You doubtless want to know what Idea I entertain of this modern *Drama*, and perhaps some may put this Question to me in a malicious View. But before I answer such a Person, it may be proper for me to ask him as follows. What is your Notion of Music in general? Do you think it prejudicial in it self? Certainly no, since it may soften and corrupt, or exalt and improve the Mind, accordingly as it is applied; and indeed it sometimes rises on the Stage to a noble Severity. I now enquire what is your Opinion of Dancing, which is always introduced in Opera's*; do you absolutely condemn it? You hesitate a little. But you would not disapprove it, when exerted in the nimble Motion of the Feet moving in Cadence, in the easy Swing of the Arms, and the sprightly,

* The Operas in *France* are always enlivened with Dances.

statum spectaculis meritò dixerimus unum & multiplex; quod ex Tragœdiâ Græcâ natum, vix aliquid maternum retinet; cujus ea co- augmentatio est, ut inter dramata ad veras artis dramaticæ regulas exacta, pro monstro haberi debeat: cujus ea cognatio est cum monstris, & quòd magnam excitet videndi cupiditatem, & quòd genuinis naturæ operibus magis videatur admirabile; & quòd plus admirabilitatis habeat, quàm veræ laudis.

Expectatis haud dubiè de isto recentioris Theatri spectaculo quid sentiam, & est fortasse qui me de illo suspiciosè & malignè interroget. Cui priusquam respondeo, pauca lubet percontari. Ante omnia illud quæro à te, qui meam sententiam expetis, quid sentias de cantu symphonico? Illumne suaptè naturâ nocivum existimes? Nequaquam certè: ut enim ad mollia & lasciva inflecti, sic ad severa & heroïca intendi potest; & in Theatrali scenâ ad severitatem quandoque intenditur. Nunc illud sciscitor, quid tibi videatur de saltatione (quoniam in dramate Musico partes secundas obtinet) illamne omnino improbes? Hic te paululum hærare video. At in motu pedum ad numeros composito, in facili brachiorum

D

jacta-

graceful Motion of the whole Body, provided nothing wanton or indecent were seen on this Occasion? You permit it with these Restrictions? Very well. I would now enquire of you, whether the mighty Acts of Heroes may not be expressed in Verse, improved with the Charms of Harmony? This you readily grant, and very justly. I go farther, and ask whether, when the Virtues of Heroes are described in Music, they are not capable of soothing the Ear, of striking the Soul, and of exciting in it an Emulation for true Glory? This Effect, you answer, it must necessarily produce in all but the Deaf or the Stupid. I here cease my Enquiries, and yours also ought to end. 'Tis therefore my Opinion, and it should be yours, that the musical Drama, may, under proper Regulations, contribute to the Improvement of our Manners. Let some great Action be given which the theatric Lyre has made delightfully vocal; the Verse of which flows with Ease, and yet is weighty and sententious; where the Music breathes the utmost Sweetness, and at the same Time is bold and masculine: Let these be accompanied with Dances which are easy and severe, sprightly and modest; Dances adapted to the Subject of the Poem, and made themselves, by the Justness and Regularity of their Movements, a mute kind of Poetry: I then pronounce, that the Opera it self would

*jaëtatione, in agili vel concinnâ libratione
 corporis nihil est quod reprehendas, si proter-
 vum sit nihil, & indecorum. Illam itaque ad-
 mittis? Bene est. Jam scire pervelim cre-
 dasne heroum facta & laudes posse lyricis com-
 prehendi versibus, & modis musicis alligari?
 Id verò facile concedes; rectè. Procedo lon-
 giùs, & quæro quid censeas de virtutibus he-
 roum modulato celebratis carmine? Possint-ne
 demulcere aures; subire animos; & pulchræ
 laudis æmulationem accendere? Id quærendum
 esse negas, quod nemo nisi surdus, vel stupidus,
 auribus & animo non persentiscat. Optimè.
 Nihil à te quæro amplius. Sed nequè tu de me
 quicquam debes ultra quærere. Jam tibi de
 meâ mente liquet. Censeo, & mecum sentias
 oportet, illud quoque Theatrum, quod recitan-
 do dramati Musico addictum est, fieri posse in-
 formandis moribus habile. Da mihi genero-
 sum aliquod facinus ad normam dramatis ly-
 rici ritè concinnatum; da versus fluentes mol-
 liter, & tamen sententiis graves; da resonan-
 tes suaviter numeros; nibiloque minus virile
 quidpiam spirantes. Adde saltationes cum se-
 veritate faciles, cum modèstiâ levès, hærentes
 cum ipso carminis argumento, ipsaque motu suo
 vim mutæ poëseos obtinentes; tum ego tibi in-*

would be a School both to delight, and to excite in us a Love for Virtue.

But now, will you answer, if the Theatre in general, may be productive of such happy Effects, why should all Persons eminent for their Piety and Learning, and who have the Interest of Virtue at Heart, judge and speak so ill of it? I answer, all Persons of this Character do not; so far from it, that several of the gravest among them, not only exempt some Theatres from their Censure, but even speak of them with Applause. If you should ask, why then do learned and pious Moralists brand even the Word *Theatre* with Infamy? My Reply is, none of these have considered what the Stage is capable of from its own Nature; but all of them, examining only the real Practice of it, have thence formed a Judgment. This latter Enquiry, so far as may be proper for us to carry it, shall be the Subject of our second Part; in which, surveying our public Theatres, we shall thence pronounce whether they really are a School of Vice or of Virtue.

PART

ipso Theatro Musico Scholam dabo oblectandis simul animis, & ad virtutem excitandis idoneam.

At enim si Theatrum universum parturientis bonis frugibus naturâ suâ opportunum est, quianam de illo universo tam malè sentiunt & loquuntur universi pietate & doctrinâ insignes viri, qui bonis moribus consultum volunt? Nego ab universis doctrinâ & pietate insignibus viris Theatrum reprobari universum. Dico Theatra quædam in scriptis eâ de re gravissimis excipi, non modò cum veniâ & absque censurâ, sed etiam cum laude & commendatione. Cur autem apud censores morum pios & eruditos in ipso Theatri nomine impressa hæreat ignominia nota, in promptu causa est. Illorum nemo investigavit quid Theatrum naturâ suâ possit esse: omnes exploraverunt, quid ipsâ re sit, & ex eo, quod est, ipsum æstimaverunt. Nos inquiramus idem parte orationis alterâ; & oculos ad publica Theatri spectacula adjiciamus, quantum licet & decet, ut ex ipso, quid sit, qualis in eo Schola sit, existimemus.

PART II.

ANY Thing whose Nature is such, as to be made either good or bad, as Art shall please to mould it, is generally, by our Depravity, turned to the latter; so averse are we to Virtue, so prone to Vice! This is evident particularly in the Theatre, which being originally so well calculated for the promoting of Virtue, is by our depraved Dispositions become a School of Vice. But who are principally to be blamed for this? The Poets in the first Place, next the Actors, and lastly the Audience; as if all who should unite their Endeavours to make the Stage of Advantage to Mankind, labour as it were by Concert to corrupt it,

First, the Blame is to be imputed to you, dramatic Poets, for deviating so widely from the true End and Design of your Muse. You don't understand, because you will not, what is expected from you as Writers for the Stage, and what the Nature of the *Drama* requires.

But the tragic and comic Writers who raised

SECUNDA PARS.

QUÆ res naturam habet, ut per artem recta fieri possit vel prava, ea plerumque nostra vitio in malam partem inclinatur. Usque aded sumus averse à recto, & ad pravam ingenio proclives. Atque illud in Theatro adverti maximè potest, quòd naturâ suâ cum possit esse Schola virtuti peridonea, factum est culpâ nostrâ Schola nequitie magistra. Quorum autem potissimum culpâ id factum est? Auctorum primò, Actorum deinde, ac denique, Spectatorum. Quasi qui ad utilitatem Theatri pro suo quisque officio animum conferre debuerunt ex pacto, ad ejus perniciem suo quisque vitio, tanquam ex condicto incumberent.

Vestra omnium prima culpa est, Poëtæ Dramatici, qui à fine pœsi dramaticæ posito aberratis. Non intelligitis, quia non vultis intelligere, quid exigit muneris vestri ratio; quid Dramatis natura postulet.

Utrumque intellexerunt illi Tragædiæ, &

fed the *Athenian* Theatre, had a just Sense of both. These were persuaded, that as they professed a fruitful and beneficial Species of Poetry, they were not allowed to bear the Name of Poet in a Commonwealth, purely as a barren, empty Title. Impowered by the Legislature to exhibit a public Spectacle to their Fellow-Citizens, they looked upon themselves as Persons invested with a public Character; as Philosophers, tacitly appointed by the Magistrate to instruct the ignorant Vulgar, and as Censors, to reform the rude, vicious Populace; in a Word, that it was their Duty to make Tragedy a School of Wisdom, and Comedy a School of Reproof. These Poets did not think it their Business to enquire into the Origin or Progress of Tragedy and Comedy, but rather to consider how they might (from their own Nature) be rendered beneficial to the World, after they had been conveyed with Lustre from Hamlets to Cities, and from Carts to Theatres. Accordingly they distinguished their Provinces, appointing Tragedy to calm the Passions by Terror and Pity, and Comedy to reform the Mind by Ridicule and Censure. Such was the End they proposed to themselves, nor did they deviate from it in their Writings, if we except

the

Comædiæ Principes, qui Theatrum Athenis excitaverunt. Non arbitrati sunt licere sibi vanum & sterile in Republicâ poetæ nomen gerere, quoniam id pœseos genus profiterentur, quod esset naturâ suâ fertile & frugiferum. Putaverunt se in civitate suâ publico fungi munere, quippè qui auctoritate publicâ publicum darent civibus spectaculum. Sic induxerunt animum sibi tacitâ voce patriæ demandari Philosophorum munia apud imperitam multitudinem, officia censorum apud improbum vulgus, vel inficetum: proindeque suum esse sapientiam docere in Tragædiis; censuram in Comædiis exercere. Neque verò spectandum esse undenam ortum ducerent Tragædia, & Comædia, vel quonam fuissent educatæ modo, sed considerandum quid naturâ suâ possent efficere, postquam essent ex pagis in urbem, ex plaustro in Theatrum cum decenti habitu receptæ. Sic ergo suas utrique partes distribui censuerunt oportere, ut Tragædia terrendo & miserando temperaret cupiditates; Comædia ridendo, & carpendo pravitates corrigeret. Hæc illorum fuit opinio; neque ab opinione recessit ipsa scribendi consuetudo, si Comicos ex-

cerpamus,

the comic Poets, who indeed went too great Lengths in Calumny and Detraction.

But what Idea, ye *French* comic and tragic Writers, do you form to your selves of theatric Poesy? In what View do most of you write for the Stage? In this: You consider a dramatic Piece as a Work of Genius, but of little Use when it does not redound to your private Emolument. You ascend to the Stage as to an Eminence, where your Talents may soon be conspicuous, and whence your Fame may soar aloft, and fly with a swift Wing to all Parts of the learned World. You think, that 'tis enough for you to be ranked among the celebrated dramatic Writers; but are little solicitous whether your Performances entitle you to a Seat among the Virtuous. That Maxim of *Horace*, *The Aim of the Poet is to instruct or delight*, you so interpret, that neglecting the former, which is of the greatest Importance, you have an Eye solely or principally to the latter; and chuse to divert Mankind rather than improve them. But what is the Consequence of this? By your erroneous Conduct dramatic Poetry in general is turned from its natural Channel; and that which ought to be its only Aim, to improve by pleasing, is calculated merely to please, though to the Prejudice of the Audience. But lest you should think these so many random
 After-

cerpamus, qui maledicendi studio longius processerunt.

Quænam autem de poesi dramaticâ existimatio vestra est, scriptores Tragædiarum vel Comædiarum Gallici? Quâ mente, quo consilio ad Theatrum plerique acceditis? Sic poema dramaticum suscipitis, ut opus plenum quidem industriâ, sed fructu vacuum, nisi qui ad utilitatem vestram redundet. Sic in scenam conscenditis, ut in locum sublimem, ubi vestrum ingenium fiat citò conspicuum; & unde fama vestra possit agili pennâ tollere se; atque in omnes orbis eruditi partes convolare. Vobis satis esse creditis in eximio Poetarum Dramaticorum ordine censeri, parum solliciti quem inde locum in bonorum civium numero obtineatis. Quod dixit Horatius, aut prodesse poetas velle, aut delectare, sic interpretamini, ut relicta priori parte, quæ potior est, alteram, quæ deterior, sequamini unicè, vel præcipuè; & oblectationem popularem utilitati publicæ anteponatis? Inde quid fit? Ut universa poesis dramatica ductu vestro aberret à scopo; & quæ in eo tota debet esse, ut oblectando profit; in hoc tota sit, ut placeat; vel si placendo noceat. Quod ne temere dictum putetis, singulas

Assertions, let us examine together the several Kinds of theatric Poesy.

Our Tragedy is as sententious and majestic as that of *Athens*, and boasts as great an Elegance of Diction. The tragic Muse was never inspired with more exalted Thoughts, or cloathed them in more graceful Expressions. But alas! how much is she degenerated from her antient candid Severity. The *Athenian* Tragedy healed the Diseases of the Mind, but that of the Moderns corrupts it. In *Athens* it extinguished a Thirst of Empire, the greatest Crime in that Republic; but it now breathes into the Souls of the *French* a double Passion, Revenge and Love, the most deadly Pests to Religion and Society.

Why did you, O *Corneille*! born to irradiate Tragedy, and formed by Nature to see how far aloft the Genius of Man could soar; why did you light up in the savage Breasts of your Countrymen, the destructive Fire of single Combat, by setting before them the pernicious Example of a *Spanish* Hero,* as though they were not naturally too apt to be enflamed? Should you not have blushed to exhibit the furious *Rodriguez*, and the crazy old *Didacus* his Father, wresting the fatal Dagger out of the Hands of the tragic Muse,

* In his famous *Cid*.

merely

las dramatum species mecum animo percurrite.

Nihil equidem est quod in Tragædiâ Atticam gravitatem sententiarum, & sermonum elegantiam hodie desideremus. Numquam illa sensit superbius; numquam elegantius dixit. At quantum de pristina suâ deflexit integritate disciplinæ! Quæ Athenis manum admovebat sanandis ægri pectoris affectibus, nunc corrumpendis adhibet. Quæ in Atheniensium animis extinguebat regnandi sitim, quâ nullus esset morbus Reipublicæ capitalior, nunc in Gallorum sensibus geminam accendit cupiditatem, quâ nulla sit pestis vel Rei civili vel Rei Christianæ funestior; ardorem ultionis dico, & amoris libidinem.

Te-ne, Corneli Magne, vir ad laudem Tragici carminis procreate, in quo natura experiri velle visa est quatenus humanum ingenium possit cogitando assurgere, te-ne, in crudis civium tuorum pectoribus exitialem singularium certaminum furorem accendisse, pravo herois Hispanici exemplo, quasi non satis ipsi suâ sponte furerent? Non te puduit cum tuo præferoce juvene Roderico, & ejus patre Didaco, debili senē, arreptum ex Tragædiæ manibus pugionem

merely to deliver it into those of your Brethren, in order that they might have Recourse to Duels for revenging of private Injuries; and by that Means pollute the Bosom of their Country with Blood, which being so illustrious could not but be dear to it! Did not you know the mighty Power of your Verse? Were you not sensible that the more weighty your Sentiments were, the deeper they would sink into the Soul, and inflict the more cruel Wound? But you did not reflect, O *Corneille*, equally admirable for Virtue, as for your poetical Talents; as conspicuous for the Simplicity of your Manners as for the Beauty of your Genius; you did not reflect, how easy 'tis for brutal Fury to break out, whilst we are endeavouring to inspire the Soul with Fortitude. Thrice happy for Mankind, that you did not treat as successfully of Love; but possibly the Vigour of your Genius could not descend to the Softness of that Passion, or the Majesty of your Numbers was not susceptible of its Blandishments: otherwise, what a Flame would you have raised in the Theatre! But unhappily for the World, there appeared another most skilful Love-Preceptor, whose soothing Breath blew the Torch of *Cupid*, and inflamed the Breasts of the Audience with tender, destructive Ardors.

For there arose, in the Decline of *Corneille's*
Life,

nem tradere in tuorum manus fratrum, qui ad ulciscendas auctoritate privatâ injurias ru-
erent in vulnera, & patriæ sinum hoc cariore,
quo nobiliore sanguine commacularent? An te
tuorumque vim carminum ignorabas? Nescie-
bas quo plus inesset ponderis in tuis sententiis,
hoc illas descendere altiùs in animos, & gra-
viores plagas infligere? Non cogitâsti profectò,
homo tam simplex quàm ingeniosus, tam opti-
mus civis quàm optimus Poëta, non cogitâsti
quàm facilè sit fortitudinem excitando furo-
rem concitare. Factum bene, quòd non ita
fueris amorum tractator idoneus; sive illorum
mollitudinem refugeret ingenii tui robur; sive
illorum blanditias non admitteret tua in car-
minibus magniloquentia: quod nisi esset, quàm
violentis scenam ignibus inflammâsses? At
factum malè, quòd repertus sit alter amoris
præceptor intelligentissimus, qui facem cupidi-
neam ventilaret blando flatu, & pectora te-
neris tantoque magis noxiis ardoribus succen-
deret.

Exitit nimirum, jam senescente Cornelio, ju-
nior

Life, a young * Poet, who was happy in his Genius, skilful at Invention, acquainted with Nature, patient in his Compositions, rich with the Spoils of *Greece*, wealthy from his own Fund, correct in his Diction, and flowing in his Numbers. This Poet studiously infused the softest Spirit of Love into his dramatic Pieces, prompted either by the Tenderness of his Disposition, or a stronger Thirst of Praise. For having before endeavoured to rival *Corneille*, at that Time the Prince of tragic Writers, and despairing to tread in his Steps, he resolved to strike out a new Path.

Corneille, great and sublime, astonished the Soul by the Majesty of his Sentiments; *Racine* soothed the Passions by the Tenderness of his Strains. The one formed his Heroes more than Men; those of the other were obnoxious to every Frailty. The former gave to various Nations their peculiar Genius, Manners and Customs; the latter, not regarding the apparent Difference in Nations, made all his Characters *French*, that is of the most tender Complexion. The former inspired his Women with a male, tragic Soul; the latter breathed into his Heroes, effeminate elegiac Thoughts. The Genius of the former had pierced into the Cabinets of Kings, in Order to reveal the various Machinations of Poli-

* Racine.

nior poëta, ingenio felix, artificio solers, naturæ sciens, limæ patiens, spoliis Græciæ dives, de suo locuples, sermone purus, versu lenis, qui totum intenderet animum ad suscitandos in Tragædiâ ignes amatorios; sive ita ferret hominis mitior indoles; sive ita suaderet laudis acrior æmulatio. Cùm enim Cornelium jam pridem in scenâ Tragicâ regnantem æmulari vellet; ipsumque desperaret per ejus vestigia consequi, aliam prorsus viam sibi apertendam esse ratus est.

Cornelius grandia sectatus perculerat mentes ambitiosâ quâdam majestate sententiarum; Racinius mollia sectatus animos suavi quâdam affectuum teneritudine demulfit; Ille suos heroes supra humanæ sortis præstantiam extulerat: hic suos demisit ad omnem humanæ fragilitatis debilitatem. Ille suum cuique proprium & gentile asseruerat ingenium pro vario terrarum & gentium discrimine: hic neglectâ regionum discrepantiâ & nationum, Gallicam omnibus, id est, teneram blandamque attribuit indolem. Alter fœminis quoque spiritus afflaverat graves & Tragicos: alter viris etiam sensiculos inspiravit dulces & Elegiacos. Ille in aulas regum animo penetraverat, ut ibi
E *pruden-*

ticks; that of the latter had stole into the Assemblies of the Fair, there to discover the several Stratagems in the Art of Love. *Corneille*, soaring aloft like the Bird of *Jove*, sporting amid Thunder and Lightning, spread Noise and Terror universally: *Racine*, like the tender Dove of *Venus*, hovering over *Roses* and *Myrtles*, breathed the softest Moan. In fine, *Corneille*, still flying aloft, which is more arduous and more obnoxious to mighty Dangers, and exciting Admiration, sought for Applause, and extorted it from the Unwilling: *Racine*, on the contrary, rising seldom, which is safer, and sustaining his Flight with Grace, returned immediately to the Loves, when he obtained Applause by his soothing Artifices, and was indulged it with Pleasure. His Sighs were not given to the Winds, for by them he obtained his Wishes. He did not tear the Laurel from *Corneille's* Brow, his Heroes and especially his Heroines binding his own Temples with Myrtle Wreathes. He did not drive *Corneille* from the Throne, but seated himself by him. The fighting Dove shared the Empire with the Thunder-darting Eagle. How signal a Victory was this, how glorious a Triumph!

You know, illustrious Auditors, what was the Issue of this Victory. So happy a Boldness

prudentiæ politicæ machinationes detegeret: hic in puellarum cætus cogitatione irrepfit, ut illic artis amatoricæ calliditates deprehenderet. Cornelius sublime volans, ut Jovis ales, inter fulgura & fulmina ludibundus omnia fragore compleverat: Racinius, ut Veneris columbulus, circum rosaria, & myrteta volitans, omnia gemitibus personuit. Cornelius denique, quod magis arduum, magnisque casibus obnoxium est, altius semper nitendo, & admirationem movendo, quæserat plausum, & vel ab invitis extorserat: Racinius contra, quod magis pronum est, magisque tutum, rariùs assurgendo, scitè volatum sustinendo, mox ad amores revolvendo, eblanditus est suffragia, & à volentibus obtinuit. Neque verò in ventos abierunt ejus suspiria; per ea factus est voti compos. Suas quidem Cornelio non excussit laureas: sed myrteas ei coronas sui passim heroes, ac suæ potissimum heroïdes, certatim intexuerunt. Non expulit æmulum regno, sed Theatri solium cum eo partitus est. Divisum imperium cum fulminante Aquilâ gemens Columbulus impetravit. Id autem potuisse consequi quanta laus, quanta victoria, qualis triumphus?

Scitis, Auditores, quis hujus victoriæ fuerit

ness gave Rise to a Multitude of Copists. Tho' the Author shewed, by piously abandoning the Stage, his Disapprobation of those Tragedies which turn chiefly on Love; yet most of his buskin'd Successors have endeavoured to imitate their Master's Tenderness, and like him have broke through those dramatic Laws which relate to Love.

The Poets in Question were not restrained by those Requisites in dramatic Pieces, the Unity of Action and its attendant Simplicity. They frequently made their Plots double, or divided the Action by contrasting of jealous Rivals; and, like *Racine*, interwove, in a forced, unnatural Way, their *Eriphiles* with their *Iphigenias*, their *Aricias* with their *Phædras*.

Truth, so essential in a dramatic Writer, especially when he treats of exalted Subjects, was neglected by these Poets. They debased antient and well known Events, by intermixing them with recent, unknown Fictions, and engaged their *Hippolytus's* in wild, frantic Amours.

Probability, so requisite even in Fable, was not observed. When their *Alexanders* were combating for Glory, and their *Mithridates's* for Kingdoms, they would call those Warriors unseasonably from the bloody Field, merely to make them wrangle about a Mistress.

They

exitus. Felix audacia multos habuit imitatores. Istud amatorium Tragædiæ genus, licet ab auctore suo piâ Theatri desertione damnatum, amplexi sunt plerique omnes, qui postea cothurnum induerunt. Neque illos ab incepto revocaverunt leges dramaticæ complures, quæ fuerunt amoris causâ violandæ.

Non eos repressit adhibenda in actione unitas, & unitatis amica simplicitas. Sæpè geminauerunt, vel diviserunt actionem inductis rivalitatibus, & suas Eriphilas cum Iphigeniis, suas Aricias cum Phædris violenter intricaverunt.

Non eos coercuit retinenda argumenti veritas; maximè ubi adjuncta est veritati celebritas. Argumenta vetera & nota novis, & ignotis deturpaverunt fabulis; & suos Hippolytos insanis amoribus implicuerunt.

Non eos prohibuit servanda in omnibus, etiam fictis rebus, verisimilitudo. In medio præliorum æstu, suos Alexandros de gloriâ, suos Mithidrates de regno dimicantes ad intempestiva amorum jurgia revocaverunt.

They did not employ the Variety of Colours which different dramatic Pieces require; for in most of their Tragedies, whether sacred or profane, Rivals were introduced, who all delivered themselves in the same amorous Strain.

Was it in this View that Love's destructive Torch was lighted up on the Stage? that 'twas degraded to a School in which *Cupid* sways the Scepter, enacts Laws, inverts the Dictates of Morality; ascribes Superiority to the softer Sex, and Servitude to Men; proclaims Peace or denounces War, infringes all Laws divine and human, and is esteemed the only Deity? In a Word, where the whole Subject of the *Drama* is an effeminate or boisterous Passion, which ought to be banished the Stage, or suffered to appear only a few Moments, and be drove from it, after having been remarkably chastized?

Possibly our Poets introduce this gentle, this deadly Passion, with no other Design but, like other Diseases of the Mind, to heal it. Admirable! to eradicate Love by fomenting it! What is this but kindling a Fire purposely to extinguish it? To administer Poison, merely that it may be thrown up again, after it has pierced the Bowels? This Method may indeed be efficacious in calming such Passions

Non eos retardavit quærenda in variis dramatibus formæ colorumque varietas: omnes ferme Tragædias sive profanas, sive sacras, simili delineatas rivalitatum formâ, simili amorum pigmento coloratas induxerunt.

Tanti erat scilicet Theatrum funestare cupidineis facibus; & in eo Scholam erigere, ubi Amor teneat sceptrum, ponat leges, invertat mores, dominatum tribuat fœminis, servitutem viris, paces regat & bella, humana divinaque violet jura; & solus pro Numine habeatur. Ubi demum totam occupet scenam molli & violenta cupiditas, quam à Theatro semper exulare decuit; vel nunquam eò prodire, nisi ut egregiè castigata continuò ejiceretur.

At idèd fortasse blanda illa & sæva cupiditas per nostros Auctores inducitur, ut ei quemadmodum cæteris turbati animi ægrotationibus fiat medicina. Præclara vero medendi ratio, amorem excitare ut comprimatur! Hoc facere, quid aliud est, nisi incendium spargere, ut posteaquam exarserit, restinguatur? Venenum propinare, ut cum viscera pervaserit, evomatur? Hic sanè curandi modus valeat in sanan-

as fill the Soul with Horror; Passions which are overcome, not by struggling with, but by flying them; not by being ignorant of, but well acquainted with their fatal Power. Thus the tragic Writers of Antiquity sometimes attempted to suppress our inbred Terrors, by exhibiting mighty Calamities, in order that the frequent Sight of these might weaken the Impression those Terrors naturally make; and induce us to bear with Patience, flighter and less grievous Evils.

But never let us employ this Method, in the View of healing and suppressing such Diseases and Passions of the Mind as agreeably sooth it: Passions, whose Allurements are to be overcome, not by Opposition, but by Flight; not by being sensible to, but if possible wholly ignorant of their destructive Blandishments.

That the illustrious Masters of the *Athenian* Theatre were firmly of this Opinion, appears from their not shewing the least Indulgence to Love, in the Multitude of Tragedies they wrote. *Æschylus* never introduced it in his dramatic Pieces, *Sophocles* but once, and *Euripides* twice only. But with what Caution was Love admitted! It appeared in the Theatre unaccompanied with Artifice and delusive Snares, and went off, attended with Horror and Punishment.

Perhaps our Poets would be allowed to exhibit

dis iis animi affectibus, quos parit horror quidam naturæ ea reformidantis, quorum vincendus est metus, non fugiendo, sed occurrendo; non ignorando, sed experiendo. Sic Tragicæ veteres, ingenitum animi terrorem sanare aliquando voluerunt, maxima proponendo infortunia, quæ usurpata oculis, ipso videndi usu, amitterent formidinem; & ad toleranda patienter minora fortunæ incommoda excitarent.

At procul absit ejusmodi curatio ab insidiosis illis animi commotionibus, quas natura cupidius appetit; quarum illecebra vincenda est non occursando, sed averfando; non sentiendo, sed carendo, atque, si fieri potest, nesciendo.

Hoc illis persuasissimum erat prudentissimis scenæ Atticæ magistris, qui nihil amori, in immenso illo Tragædiarum suarum numero, indulgendum esse censuerunt. Illum quippè nunquam Æschylus, semel Sophocles, iterum Euripides admisit: quanam autem admisit cautione; ut veniret sine blanditiâ, sine illicio; & cum horrore, cum supplicio abiret.

Danda forte fuit Poëtis nostratibus venia,
 si

hibit Love, in their dramatic Pieces with the Restrictions abovementioned. But how do they introduce that Deity? With the whole Choir of attendant Graces, with all the inveigling Illusion of tender Sentiments, all the Poison of the most engaging Flattery. *Cupid* descends on the Stage, and there lays open his Wounds, not with the Design of being healed, but to transfix the Hearts of the Spectators: He sheds a Flood of Tears, not to extinguish his Fires, but to blow up a stronger Flame; He bewails his own Sorrows, not to excite Repentance, but merely to foment Desire.

Unhappy tragic Muse! Thou who wert invented to deplore the Calamities of others, now weep thine own. Call to Mind thy noble Genius and Disposition under thy Parents; How chaste, how courageous under *Æschylus*; how severe, how manly under *Sophocles*; how humane, how compassionate under *Euripides*. Behold what thou now art after so long a Series of Ages? Behold this and blush if thou art conscious of thy Ignominy; groan, if thou feelest the Anguish of thy Wounds.

But whilst I deplore the Change that has befallen Tragedy, methinks I see and hear the comic Muse advance with a jocund Aspect, and congratulate her self for enjoying a much better Fortune than antiently. She

protests

fi talem in Theatrum amorem producerent. Verum heu! qualis ab iis deducitur? Cum toto Charitum choro, cum omni affectuum lenocinio, cum universo illecebrarum veneno. Sua quidem amor in theatro nostro palam ostentat vulnera, sed ut lædat, non ut sanetur. Suas fundit lacrymas, sed ut accendat ignes, non ut restinguat. Suos queritur dolores, sed ut desiderium acuat, non ut pœnitentiam exstimulet.

O Tragœdia! infelix Tragœdia! quæ lugendis alienis casibus inventa es, tuos ipsa casus luge. Recordare qualis olim fueris apud primos parentes tuos; quàm apud Æschylum casta & animosa; quàm apud Sophoclem severa & virilis; quàm apud Euripidem misericors & humana. Vide qualis hodie sis apud seros nepotes tuos; quàm per amores corrupta & corruptrix, hoc vide; & erubescere, si tua agnoscis opprobria; si tua sentis vulnera, ingemisce.

Sed dum Tragœdiæ vicem doleo, Comœdiam videre & audire mihi videor, quæ se nobis offert hilari vultu; & suam sibi fortunam veteri sorte multo meliorem, gratulatur. Neque
verò

protests that her Character is quite different from what it was under *Aristophanes*, who obliged her to chastise the Faults of the *Athenians* by a greater Fault; and to revile the most illustrious Citizens, either by Name, or glance at them so plainly, that 'twas almost impossible not to know them. That she is not what she was under *Plautus*, when, loose and petulant, she used to pollute the Amphitheatre with obscene Jest and Repartees, borrowed from the Refuse of the People: Nor what she appeared under *Terence*, when she displayed to the *Roman* Youth, the Amours of *Grecian* Curtezans. But that she now, if we may believe her, reveals her self with the Grace and Decency, suitable to a polite, elegant, and modest Nation; improved in her own morals, and improving those of others. Let us now examine what Advantages we reap from her. Tell us, thou happy Instructress, what Immorality thou reformest among us?

I reprove such modish young Sparks as are too Finical in their Dress. A just Reproof, were there nothing in Youth that better deserved Reprehension.

I rebuke the Pedantic among the Fair, such as are too affected in the Choice of Words. A just Criticism, if there be nothing in the Pride or Petulance of the female Sex that better deserves Censure.

I ani-

verò se talem esse, qualis fuit quondam apud Aristophanem, cum civium culpas castigaret majore culpâ; & urbis procures nominatim, vel malè dissimulato nomine maledictis proscinderet: neque qualis extitit apud Plautum, cum impudica & impudens salibus obscænis, ex macello petitis, amphitheatra conspergeret: neque qualis per Terentium inducta est, cum meretricios amores, advectos è Græcia apud juventutem Romanam enunciaret. Se nunc talem prodire, qualem esse deceat apud populum elegantem, urbanum, verecundum, emendatam moribus scilicet & morum emendatricem. Videamus sanè quid bonæ frugis afferat nova ista morum magistra. Dic nobis, ô bona, quid apud nos pravi moris emendes?

Ego Juvenes politulos nimia vestium laxitate diffuentes coerceo. Justa coercitio: si nihil fuerit in licentiâ juvenili severius coercendum.

Ego fœminas eruditionis, vel exquisitæ locutionis gloriam captantes reprehendo. Æqua reprehensio: si nihil sit in muliebri superbiâ vel petulantia magis reprehendendum.

I animadvert, in a jocular Way, on Man-haters. This possibly would be laudable, had you first animadverted on those who, by conniving at the Faults of Mankind, corrupt them.

I restore to their Health and Senses such as are troubled with imaginary Diseases. A noble Cure, had you first healed those whose Minds are infected with Vice.

I establish various Schools for the Instruction and Improvement of Husbands, Wives and others. Excellent Institutions certainly, if designed for the inculcating of Virtue. But what Apology will you make, should we prove that in your various School, (this however I know only by frequent hearsay) you prompt Mankind to Vice more than to Virtue?

What if Youths of both Sexes are by you taught to divest themselves of that Beauty of the Soul, Simplicity, merely to foment stolen Fires; to enter into the connubial State, not by the prudent Advice of Parents, but by the Suggestions of Concupiscence?

What if Wives are by you instructed to violate their conjugal Fidelity, to elude the Vigilance of their Husbands, to impose upon them by a Thousand shameless Artifices, and so contumeliously to insist upon their being punished for Crimes they themselves commit;

Ego in homines humani Generis ofores animadverto. Digna forsitan animadversio: si prius in homines humani generis corruptores fuerit animadversum.

Ego homines imaginario conflictatos corporis morbo ad sanitatem revoco. Egregia sanatio: si homines vero laborantes animi vitio antea fuerint ad sanitatem revocati.

Ego maritis, & uxoribus, aliisque hominibus erudiendis scholam multiplicem instituo. Magnifica prorsus institutio: dum ad bonos mores erudias. Quid si autem (dicam enim, quod non spectavi quidem, sed de te sæpius inaudui) Quid si in tuâ multiplici Scholâ homines ad nequitiam magis quàm ad virtutem instituas?

Quid si juvenculi & adolescentulæ per te condiscunt simplicitatem animi exuere, furtivos ignes alere, connubia ex libidinis consilio, non ex parentum judicio, contrahere?

Quid si per te edocentur nuptæ conjugialis pacti jura infringere, maritorum vigilantiam fallere, maritos modis indignis illudere, à maritis pœnas injuriarum, quas acceperunt
ipsi

mit; Crimes which reflect (but very unjustly) the highest Dishonour on their Husbands?

What if it should be found that you persuade Husbands to indulge their Wives in Liberties of every Kind, to wink at their Faults, to bear patiently with domestic Outrages, and to ascribe these to Fortune, not to Guilt?

What if you teach Domesticks to throw off all Sense of Shame to assist others in artful Frauds, to ensnare the Minds of Youths and Maidens in lawless Loves; and especially to trick their aged Masters out of Money, and afterwards ridicule them? Do you laugh?

What if you accustom your Pupils to favour and applaud Vice, and to condemn and rail at Virtue? That you generally represent a worthless Character, smart, witty and facetious; and on the contrary draw a virtuous One, silly, stupid and ridiculous? Do you still laugh? Begone, thou wicked Directress of our Morals, thou worst Corruptress of the Mind, thou Bane to domestic Peace, thou Reproach and Destruction to Families!

But why do I condemn Comedy, since 'tisn't naturally criminal, but made so by others? Let us rather accuse those comic Poets, who, when they might have presented us with virtuous Pieces, gave us those of a depraved, vicious Kind.

We are chiefly to censure our Prince of comic Writers and Actors, *Moliere*. A Poet
more

*ipſi, non intulerunt, per ſummam contumeli-
am, repoſcere?*

*Quid ſi maritis ſuades omnem uxoribus va-
gandi licentiam permittere, in earum delictis
connivere, opprobria domeſtica placido ferre
animo, & illa non culpæ, ſed fortunæ impu-
tare?*

*Quid ſi famulos famulaſque doces nihil pu-
dere, alienis fraudibus inſervire, juvenum &
puellarum animos vetitis amoribus illaqueare,
heros præſertim ſeniores emungere argento, &
naſo ſuſpendere? Rides?*

*Quid ſi tuos conſuefacis diſcipulos vitio pa-
trocinari, virtutem explodere? Et apud te om-
nis ferme homo nequam ſaluſ eſt, lepidus, fe-
ſtivus; vir contra probus fit per te inſaluſus,
ineptus, ridiculuſ. Etiam ridere pergis? A-
page te, magiſtra morum improba, corruptrix
animorum peſſima, rei familiaris pernicies,
diſciplinæ domeſticæ labes & ruina.*

*Quamquam quid ego Comædiam increpo?
quæ non ſuapte naturâ ſed alieno crimine eva-
ſit improba. Accuſemus eos potius, qui cum bo-
nam dare poſſent, pravam facere maluerunt.*

*Accuſetur inprimis ille Comædiæ Gallicæ
auctor & actor primarius; poëta indole ma-*

more from Genius than by study, he turned Player; a Profession which the Licentiousness of his Inclinations, not the Frowns of Fortune, prompted him to embrace. Born to a grave and serious Life, he was allured to the ludicrous one of the Stage; a rigid Observer of Ridicule, and a facetious Imitator; laborious, without appearing such, in his Compositions, and correct without Constraint: Close in his Prose, and copious in his Numbers; rich in Maxims, and fruitful in witty Turns; comprizing in himself most of the Virtues as well as Vices of the comic Writers. As poignant as *Aristophanes*, and sometimes almost as loose in his Repartees: As agreeably facetious as *Plautus*, and sometimes as scurrilously jocose: As well versed in the Manners of Mankind as *Terence*, and frequently as unchaste in his Love Scenes. Should you enquire whether he excels most from Nature or from Art; I answer that he is admirable, and at the same Time abominable from both; his Guilt rises in Proportion to the Excellence of his Talents, no Character being worse than that of a skilful Preceptor in Wickedness.

After *Moliere*, those Poets are to be accused, who not being capable of imitating his Virtues, emulated his Faults, and went beyond him in the Obscenity of their Expressions. But these did not consider, that they were seeking Applause from a Species of Wit, which,

gis, quàm studio; factus histrio non fortunæ iniquitate, sed vitæ licentiâ; natus ad vitæ seria & traductus ad scenæ ludicra; ridiculi observator rigidus, & facetus imitator; in scribendo diligens sine curâ, & sine limâ politus; pressus in oratione solutâ, & in strictâ copiosus; sententiarum plenus, & jocos abundans; omnes fermè comicorum virtutes, & pleraque vitia in se uno complexus; tam salsus quàm Aristophanes, nec multo magis aliquando in salium delectu castus & severus. Tam ingeniosè festivus quàm Plautus; nec minus interdum scurriliter jocosus: Tam intelligens morum quàm Terentius, nec minùs in amorum corruptelis frequens. De quo, jure ambigas naturâ-ne sit melior an arte? Optimus utrâque; & utrâque pessimus, tantoque pejor, quanto melior; quia optimo nequitiae artifice nihil pejor.

Accusentur post eum, qui cùm ejus virtutes non possent imitando exprimere, vitia æmulati sunt; & superaverunt omni verborum obscœnitate; neque intellexerunt, se laudem petere ab eo facetiarum genere in quo quan-

which, is the more inglorious to a Writer, the more Reputation it gains him.

Such Poets likewise stand condemned, who, though ashamed of being openly obscene, did yet cover their loose Ideas, with the decent, but transparent Veil of Ambiguity. These did not reflect, that the Species of Ribaldry which conceals it self with no other Design but to be seen, is generally more dangerous than that which reveals it self openly and undisguised; and for this Reason, the Endeavour of the latter to display it self, shocks the Eye, but the Attempt of the former to conceal it self, invites and allures it.

They also are to be blamed (tho' acquitted in their own Opinion) who being capable of beautifully dictating Philosophy under the comic Cloak, and of entertaining with innocent and polite Humour, do yet fancy they are not sufficiently comic, unless they ingratiate themselves with the meanest of the People by some petulant Stroke, and raise an impertinent Laughter. But these don't duly weigh, what kind of Persons they should be ambitious of pleasing; nor sufficiently consider, that in all virtuous and well regulated Governments, such theatrical Pieces only ought to be exhibited, as are strictly moral throughout, and calculated either to reprove Vice or to commend Virtue. The Poet who writes with any other View, degrades his own Character, and deviates

tum famæ quis colligit, tantum habet infamiae.

*Accusentur etiam, qui cum apertè spurcidi-
ci verecundarentur esse, turpes sententias in-
volverunt ambiguis vocibus, tanquam honesto
velo, sed tenui & pellucido; neque animadver-
terunt turpitudinem, quæ se, latendo, prodat,
& prodendo lateat, vulgò plus habere periculi,
quàm quæ nuda prodit; Quoniam hæc offendit
oculos, dum vult videri; illa, dum latere vult,
oculos invitât.*

*Accusentur illi quoque, suo licèt absoluti
judiciò, qui cum egregiè Philosophentur sub
palliolo comico, & jocos solâ urbanitate tinctos
facile possint offerre, se minùs comicos fore pu-
tant, nisi popello se approbent aliquo procaci
dicto; & risum petulantem excitent. Neque
satis reputant, quibus se placere deceat; neque
satis attendunt, in civitate bene moratâ nul-
lum cujusvis generis spectaculum dari oportere,
quod non sit bene moratum ex omni parte, &
ad censuram vitii, vel ad commendationem
virtutis elaboratum: qui secus faxit, illum à*

deviates shamefully from the End and Design of dramatic Poesy.

But in what Manner will the Authors of the musical *Drama* vindicate themselves on this Occasion? Will they say that their Poems agree with the Dictates of Morality? These Artists will confess freely that they are not very severe Censors; but then they will tell us on the other Side, that their Compositions are not designed to punish Vice on the Stage; their Aim, like the Inventors of Opera's, being merely to please and delight. That their Theatre is like a public or royal Garden, which generally is not planted with useful Trees but diversified with regular Walks, and Parterres filled with Flowers of numberless Hues; with Waters spouting from Fountains, artificial Groves echoing with the Harmony of Birds, and with Statues breathing in Marble. In a Word, like a Garden, every Part of which is wrought with the utmost Elegance, and with no other View than merely to charm the Eye and Ear.

I don't ask those skilful Artificers of Elegance and Delight, whether it was allowable to take the tragic *Chorus*, whence the Opera sprung, from its original Office, the applauding of Virtue (for that was its Employment) and engage it in Love Trifles. I grant that a Soil naturally fruitful, may be planted with
barren

sine, & sibi & Poësi dramaticæ constituto recedere cum noxâ, & flagitio.

Quonam igitur pacto se culpâ liberabunt dramatum Musicorum auctores? An se Poëmata recte morata in Theatrum edere affirmabunt? Fatebuntur ultrò quidem, se non esse morum censores admodum severos: sed negabunt id sibi propositum esse, ut vitia in Theatro castigent. Id unum se dicent eniti, quod à primis dramatis lyrici repertoribus tentatum est, ut spectaculum concinnent recreandis animis appositum. Enimvero Theatrum suum esse hortum regio, vel publico simile, qui non alat vulgò arbores fructíferas; sed in quo directæ in ordinem platani, distinctæ floribus areolæ, aquæ salientes fontibus, avibus resonantes arbusculæ, spirantes in marmore imagines, omnia denique sint ad elegantiam & oblectationem composita.

Non quæro ex peritis istis elegantiarum & oblectationum artificibus, licuerit-ne chororum tragicum, ex quo musicum drama natum est, deducere ab officio suo, id est, à commendatione virtutum (nam hæc fuerant ejus partes) & ipsum ad nugas amatorias traducere? Esto potuerint illi sine culpâ fundum naturâ suâ fru-

barren Trees of a beautiful Kind; but would it be lawful to raise noxious Plants and poisonous Flowers in it? Now let us imagine these Artists have founded, in their public or royal Garden, a School, not like that which History informs us *Plato* instituted in the academic Grove; but in the Taste of *Epicurus's*; such an one as Art, before his Birth, had embellished with all its delusive Graces in the pensile Gardens of *Semiramis*.

In the School I now hint at, let us figure to our selves *Pleasure* seated on a verdant Throne, crowned with new blown Roses, a Lyre in her left Hand, and a Cup filled with Honey in her right. Above, and over her Head, let the quiver-bearing Loves hover in Crouds. At her Feet Reason may lie prostrate, bound fast with flowry Wreathes, and lulled almost asleep by the intoxicating Fumes of the delicious, but fatal Liquor. Let Heroes and Heroines, formerly renowned for their Amours, resort thither from all Parts of the Earth. Let all the Gods and Goddeesses, whom Fiction has spread over the whole World, and *Cupid* has inflamed with his Ardors, irradiate the Assembly. In this delightful School let Persons of both Sexes be admitted, those especially in the Bloom of Life and as yet unskilled in Love, but capable of being taught it. To all these let *Pleasure* dictate

giferum conferere infæcundis arboribus, & ad steriles delicias convertere. Verùm an licuit eundem spargere floribus veneniferis, & plantis nocentibus fæcundare? Et verò fingamus eos, in horto illo suo regio, vel publico Scholam instituire, non Platoniam, qualem in umbrosis Academi hortis positam fuisse legimus; sed Epicuream, qualis ante ipsum natum Epicurum, in hortis illis Semiramidis pensilibus adornari potuit.

In istâ, quam designo, hortensi Scholâ sedeat Voluptas gramineo fulta toro, vernis coronata rosis, lyram sinistrâ, poculum melle delibutum dexterâ manu præferens. Circùm supraque caput ejus volitent denso examine pharetrati Amores. Ante illius pedes jaceat humana Ratio floreis religata nexibus, & epoto calice melito semisopita. Adsint ex cunctis orbis terrarum partibus Heroes & Heroïdes amatoriiis quondam artibus insigniores. Conveniant ipsi Dii, Deæque omnes quos Fabula toto passim disseminavit mundo; & Cupido suis ardoribus inflammavit. Convocentur ad istam amœnorem Scholam & admittantur homines utriusque sexûs, juvenes præsertim, ac puellæ, adhuc rudes amoris, sed jam dociles. His omnibus

dictate her Precepts, most of which may be in the following Strain. " Cull all such
 " Flowers as present themselves, and weave
 " them, before they wither, into Chaplets for
 " your Heads. Seize the present Delights and
 " take no Thought for Futurity. Obey those
 " Impulses which sweetly invite, and shut
 " your Ear to Reason when she calls upon
 " you to leave the Place. Indulge that sweet-
 " est of Passions, Love, and consider it as the
 " only Blessing". Let these tender Instructi-
 ons be expressed in the softest Verse, be height-
 ned with instrumental Harmony, be sung in
 Concert by melodious *Syrens*, and enlivened
 with sprightly Dances. Let Shepherds and
 Nymphs from the Meads, Fawns and Dryads
 from the Woods, *Tritons* and *Naiads* from
 the Waters, celestial Deities from the Skies,
 and those from the infernal Regions, all re-
 sort to this enchanting Place, join in the *Cho-
 rus*, and call up the Memory of their former
 Loves. In the mean Time, let gentle Sighs
 echo from all Parts; let the winged Cho-
 risters, the Zephyrs, the Brooks, and the very
 Rocks be taught to breathe Love.

What Idea, ye Auditors, would you form
 to your selves of such an imaginary School,
 where Pleasure is the Directress? But why
 do I say imaginary, since I have suppressed
 many Circumstances, and not added one.
 Let those whose Pens and Lyres are em-
 ployed in the musical *Drama* accuse me, if
 they

nibus *Voluptas* sua dicet præcepta, quæ fermè talia sint : carpere quoscunque flores obvios, & iis, antequam marcescant, caput redimire. Occupare delicias præsentis, & quid vebat hora sequens, numquam prospicere. Obsecundare cupidinibus suaviter invitantibus, & rationis aliò vocantis monita obseratis auribus præterire. Indulgere amoribus, & in iis omnes vitæ beatitates collocare. Hæc documenta *Voluptatis* delicatissima, teneris inclusa versiculis, argutis modulata fœdibus excipiant *Sirenes* canoræ, & in medio saltantium choro liquidâ voce concinant. Eadem cantitent pascuis egressi *Pastores* & *Nymphæ*; sylvis educti *Fauni* & *Dryades*; aquis emerfi *Tritones* & *Naiades*; delapsi è Cælo, advecti ex Orco *Dii superi* atque *inferi*; omnes pariter ad recolendam suorum memoriam amorum evocati. Interea blandis resonent omnia suspiriis; & amorem volucres, amorem *Zephyri*, amorem rivuli, amorem saxa ipsa suspirare doceantur.

Vestram fidem, *Auditores*, quam & qualem morum disciplinam habebimus, in istâ, quam fingo sub magistrâ *Voluptate*, *Scholâ*? Quid me autem dico fingere, cùm simulem nihil, & multa dissimulem? Arguant me erroris, vel calumniæ,

they dare, of Error or Calumny on this Occasion. Let them declare, whether all Things engaging in the Passions, tender in Sentiments, alluring in Poetry, and soft in Music, are not employed to tickle the Ear, to ensnare the Mind, to intoxicate Reason, and to raise criminal Fires?

Such then was the Fate of the Theatre, that it should one Day admit of a Doctrine more voluptuous than that of *Epicurus*, and recommend it universally in public; the Lyric Poets therefore were appointed merely to establish among Christians, a dramatic School, for soft and enervating, though not obscene Strains! 'Twas for this that *Phæbus* inspired you with such easy, such graceful Numbers, and with Verse so well adapted to musical Sounds! For this *Apollo* created *Orpheus's* with Voices so exquisite, and skilled in every Species of Harmony! For this *Mechanicks* taught those stupendous Arts, by which you seemingly change at Pleasure the whole Frame of Nature, raise Tempests, forge Thunderbolts, swell high the Seas, set open the infernal Gates, blend and confound the Earth and Skies, and all this merely to raise more furious Storms, more destructive Fires, more fatal Shipwrecks in the Mind! But was there Occasion to employ so many Miracles of Art, to defeat and extinguish Modesty, that
Orna-

calumniæ, si audent, qui scribendis vel modulandis dramatibus lyricis calamus vel citharam commodant. Doceant ipsi numquid sit in affectibus suave, in sententiis tenerum, in verbis blandum, in numeris molle, quod ad titillandas aures, ad capiendos animos, ad sopiendam rationem, ad exsuscitandam cupiditatem non adhibeatur?

Ergo illud erat in Theatri fatis, ut doctrinam Epicuræâ disciplinâ magis voluptariam admitteret aliquando, & palam omnibus combibendam proponeret. Ad hoc igitur estis instituti dramatum lyricorum opifices, ut in Republicâ Christianâ Scholam instruatis, non impuratam quidem obscænis carminibus, sed cantilenis mollibus infamâtam. Ideo vobis Musa versus annuit faciles, numerosos, & modulationi habiles? Ideo vobis Musica Orpheos, addidit vocales, argutos, & omnium scientes modulationum? Ideo machinandi ars vobis dedit arcanis motibus universam rerum naturam arbitrio vestro vertere, & tempestates ciere, tonitrua conflare, maria subruere, Inferos referare, Cælum terris miscere, ut vehementiores in animis procellas, atrociora incendia, funestiora naufragia excitetis? Tantisne fuit certandum tot
artium

Ornament and Defence of the Soul, since 'tis so very frail and weak in its own Nature?

But let us cease to reprove the Authors of the musical *Drama*, many of whom have confessed their Crime. 'Tis certain that *Quinault*, whom we may call the Parent, as it were, of Lyric Poesy in *France*, a Poet too easy, too happy in his Numbers, repented, though late, his Error; and watered with his Tears the Lawrels which his Genius, not Toil, had gained him.

I my self have heard another dramatic Writer, possessed of almost every Muse, with equal Praise and Censure, but oftner praised than censured for his Operas, condemn and disclaim them, upon knowing that the insidious Doctrine they inculcate, clashes directly with the Principles of Christianity. I wish that the rest of our theatric Poets were as intimately struck on this Occasion! If however a Consciousness of one's Fault, especially in Persons devoted to the *Drama*, be Repentance sufficient.

Would one indeed believe that Actors, whether in Tragedy, Comedy or Opera, will not confess themselves partly guilty of the pernicious Consequences which flow from the Theatre? Can these be insensible, unless they are unskilled in the Art they profess, how greatly it contributes to the Corruption of the Stage? Are not Tragedy and Comedy in their
Hands,

artium miraculis, ut pudorem naturâ suâ tam fragilem expugnaretis, profligaretis, extingueretis?

Verùm abstineamus objurgare pluribus dramatum lyricorum auctores, quorum multos habemus se confitentes reos. Illum certè qui fuit Melici poematis in Galliâ quasi parens scimus industriæ suæ nimium facilis, nimiumque felicitis pœnituisse, serò quidem, sed aliquando tamen, & partas sine sudore lauros suis postmodum fletibus irrigasse.

Alterum verò in omni fermè poematum genere versatum cum pari laude & censurâ; sed in hoc laudatum multò sæpius quàm reprehensum, audivimus cùm ejuraret opera Theatri lyrica, quòd eorum doctrinam, doctrinæ Christi adversâ fronte repugnare intelligeret. Utinam idem intelligerent reliqui scriptores dramatici! Si tamen ad pœnitendum satis est, (in hominibus præsertim Theatro deditis) suam culpam intelligere.

Quis enim credat Actores quoque sive tragicos, sive comicos, sive lyricos non agnoscere se Theatri corrupti aliquâ parte reos? An possunt nescire, nisi suæ sint artis nescii, quantum ad scenæ corruptelam artificio suo conferant?

Nonne

Hands, directly what a Bow and Shafts are in those of a skilful Archer? They indeed don't form the deadly Shafts of *Cupid*, but then they level them with the Eye, and shoot with the utmost Dexterity and Vigour.

The more beautiful therefore their Action is, the greater Mischief arises from it, unless they, on some Occasions, studiously forbear to exert themselves. Decency frequently requires this, but 'tis scarce probable they ever obey its Dictates; for who among them that acts in a vicious Character, but displays to the utmost Advantage those Talents he received from Nature, and which Art and Practice have improved? If there be a shameful Equivocation in the Turn of Wit, or any Thing immodestly tender in the Sentiment, is not the Player himself chiefly delighted with these, and does he not strive to make the Audience delighted with them? Does he not set off, if 'tis in his Power, all the Blandishments of Verse, with the Charms of Voice and Action; endeavour to rival the Writer in every alluring Grace, and to appear more knowing, more strongly affected in the Action, than the Poet himself was in the Composition?

On this Occasion the *Amazons*, those most skilful Archers, are as criminal as the Actors; such Women, I mean, as represent destructive Love Characters. Don't these appear on the Stage, compleatly equipped with Shafts of every

Nonne id omnino sunt in eorum manibus Comæ-
diæ & Tragædiæ, quod in peritâ sagittarii manu
arcus & sagittæ? Non fabricant ipsi quidem tela
Cupidinis lethifera; sed illa intendunt lacerto;
dirigunt oculo, & toto adnixa corpore jacu-
lantur.

Tantò igitur sunt nocentiores ab actione suâ,
quanto sunt in agendo solertiores. Nisi fortè su-
as vires dissimulent, suamque celent industriam;
quod ipsos sæpè quidem facere deceat; sed ali-
quando facere vix credibile est. Quotus enim
quisque illorum est, qui in exhibendo dramate
quamlibet lascivo & nocivo non explicet quic-
quid solertiæ vel accepit à naturâ, vel acqui-
sit ab arte, vel usu comparavit? Si quid in
jocis turpiter ambiguum est, si quid in affectibus
molliter tenerum; nonne in eo sibi actor placet
maximè, & aliis placere nititur? Nonne ad car-
minis blandimenta novas addit, si potest, gestûs
& vocis blanditias, ipsosque auctores conatur ille-
cebris vincere, ut in agendo plus ipse, quàm illi
in scribendo, sapere, & sentire videatur?

In quo nihil Actoribus concedunt Amazones
illæ sagittandi peritissimæ, fæminas dico, quæ
in Theatro personas cum viris homicidas, id est,
amatorias, sustinent. Nam quid omittunt illæ,
ut prodeant in scenam cum omnigeno telorum ap-

every kind, and perfectly instructed to kill? How artfully do they hurl the most inconsiderable Dart! What Multitudes are frequently wounded by a single Javelin! We shudder at the bare Reflexion on the bloody Spectacles which were exhibited in the *Roman Circus*, where Gladiators did not engage, as at the Rise of those cruel Exercises, in single Combat, but when fighting in Crouds Multitudes were cut to Pieces; so prodigal were some of the *Cæsars* of human Blood! But have we a greater Regard or more Charity for Souls! Are not as many wounded mortally by the Shafts of *Cupid* in our Theatres, as were killed by the Swords of the Gladiators in those of *Rome*? Now will any one presume to say, that the Actors are not partly guilty of this great, this dreadful Havock? They may, if in a sanguinary intestine War, Commanders only, not the private Soldiers, are to be declared guilty of all the deadly Consequences of it?

But how must Actors behave to be innocent? This cannot be very easily determined, nor is it my Business to prescribe. However, as Players are despotic in our Theatres, and admit or reject dramatic Works at Pleasure, let them receive such only as are of a chaste and moral Kind. Let 'em represent none but virtuous Characters, or such vicious ones as may be punished with Decency on the Stage. In a Word, let them abandon their Profession, rather than exhibit Plays which corrupt
Virtue,

paratu, & ad figendos animos instructissima? Quanto laborant studio, ut nullum intorqueant telum imbelle sine ictu? Quàm multa sæpè vulnera uno eodemque teli conjectu inferunt? Meminisse horret animus de cruentis illis Circi Romani spectaculis, ubi Gladiatores, non singuli cum singulis commissi, ut olim, sed turmatim congressi, & cæsi procumberent. Tanta fuit apud quosdam Cæsares humani sanguinis vilitas! An major est apud nos animarum æstimatio & caritas? An pauciores in Amphitheatro nostro cadunt animæ telis Cupidineis sauciatae, quàm in arenâ Romanâ sternerentur corpora ferro gladiatorio contrucidata? Quis autem tantam, tam luctuosam animarum stragem fieri dixerit sine Actorum culpâ, eâque gravissima? Nisi forte in bello civili & internecino tota culpa ducum est, militum nulla est.

Ecquid igitur facient Actores, ut se à culpâ eximant? Quid ipsos facere oporteat, neque promptum est dicere, neque præcipere nostrum est. At quoniam dominantur in Theatro, & Poëmata ab auctoribus oblata suscipiunt arbitrato suo, vel respuunt, nullum certè admittant drama, nisi bene moratum. Nullam gerant personam, nisi probam, vel castigabilem in scenâ & inibi probè vel castigandam. Nihil de-

Virtue, which destroy their own Souls, and those of others.

But then (will it be said) the Spectators must be pleased, most of whom, so far from approving such Pieces as are virtuous and profitable, generally like and applaud those only of a vicious, hurtful Kind. 'Tis granted; and for this Reason we pronounce, that the Depravity of the Stage is owing almost wholly to the Audience, since 'tis merely to please them, that both Poets write and Players act. But let virtuous Persons, or those who wish to be such, frequent the Playhouse, and 'twill soon be found a strictly moral School... We will now enquire what kind of People generally resort to our Theatres?

First, Persons of a prying, volatile Disposition, who perpetually flutter up and down all Parts of the Play-house purely to be seen; who gaze at every Thing round them, but never turn their Eyes on themselves.

Who next? The Indolent, the Heavy, the Slothful; Persons whose only Business is to do nothing, their only Solitude to have none, their only Study how to murder Time. We now see them at Banquets, now tatling in Assemblies, now in Gaming Houses, whence they haste to the Play-house, injudicious, and without Benefit to themselves; nay, even considering the Hours they lose as so much Gain.

Who

nique agant potius, quàm id agant, unde corrumpant bonos mores; perdantque animas, & perdendo pereant.

Atenim placendum est Spectatoribus, quorum plerisque non id probatur maximè, quod probum, & sanum est; sed id vulgò sapit, quod improbum & insalubre. Fateor: ideoque Theatri vitii culpani dico in iis præcipuam, ac propè universam residere. Quicquid enim Auctores in scribendo, quicquid Actores in repræsentando peccant, id totum fèrme spectatorum gratiâ peccant. Nemo conveniat ad Theatrum nisi emendatus, vel qui emendari velit; brevi Scholam in scenâ emendatam habebimus & morum emendatricem. Verùm quinam plerumque ad Theatra confluunt?

Primum homines curiosi, leves, ultrò citròque curstantes spectandi gratiâ, spectantes omnia, seipsos numquam respicientes.

Quinam deinde? Homines otiosi, tardi, desides; quibus unum est negotium nihil agere, una sollicitudo nihil curare, unus labor tædium fallere; nunc ad convivium, nunc ad colloquium, modò ad mensam aleatoriam, modò ad scenam Theatralem assidentes sine consilio, sine iudicio, sine fructu; imo quicquid sibi perit temporis in spectaculis, id omne lucro apponentes.

Who afterwards? Those immersed in, and almost sinking under the Weight of public or private Affairs; Persons for ever tost by the Waves of Care, and hurried away by the uncertain Whirlwind of Fortune. These fly to the Theatre as to a Harbour, to repose themselves a little, and to view from thence the Shipwrecks of other Men, but return immediately to their Dangers, their Tempests and their Rocks.

What Persons besides? Men tortured with domestic Broils, to whom no Place is so intolerable as their own Homes; incessantly acting a Tragedy or Comedy with their Wives, their Children and Servants; and running to the Theatre, merely to shun the private Scenes which are carrying on in their own Houses.

Lastly, what kind of Persons? Those of all Ranks and of none; People who cannot be called either virtuous or vicious, trifling or serious, indolent or laborious. Persons who implicitly obey Custom as a Law; living after the Example of, and determining from the Judgment of others; flocking to the Playhouse as to the Church, to a Comedy as to a Sermon, with the same religious Attention, that is, with none.

Will any one believe that Spectators of this Turn of Mind value much whether the Stage is a moral or immoral School? A School in which they seek for indolent, barren Delights only: And yet such Spectators as we have mentioned, form the most valuable, or least unworthy

Quinam postea? Homines negotiis privatis vel publicis immerſi ac propè obruti; perpetuis jactati curarum fluctibus, & incerto fortunæ turbine abrepti; divertentes ad Theatrum tamquam ad portum, ubi quiescant paululum, & unde aliena ſpectent naufragia; mox ad ſuas procellas, ad ſuos ſcopulos, ad ſua pericula ſe præcipiti curſu referentes.

Quinam præterea? Homines rixis vexati domeſticis; nuſquam pejùs habitantes, quàm apud ſe; Comædiam affiduè vel Tragædiam agentes cum uxore, cum liberis, cum famulis; atque ut ſcenas ædium privatas declinent, ad ſcenam Theatri publicam confugientes.

Quinam porro? Homines omnis & nullius ordinis; quos neque bonos dixeris, neque malos; neque leves, neque graves; neque otioſos, neque laborioſos; ſed conſuetudini tanquam legi ſervientes; alieno viventes exemplo; alieno judicantes ingenio; ſic ad Theatra, ut ad Tempſa, ſic ad fabulam comicam, ut ad ſacram concionem, religione pari, vel pari conſiderantiâ, id eſt, nullâ, ſe conferentes.

Ejuſmodi ſpectatores quis magnopere laborare credat, utrùm bene an malè morata ſit Theatri Schola? In quâ nihil ſectantur præter ſterilem & otioſam animi occupationem? Atqui

unworthy Part of an Audience. For there are others, and those not a few, who look for different Diversions and Delights in the Playhouse.

On what Motive do such Multitudes crowd thither; some corrupted by the Indulgence of their Fathers, and others instructed by their Mothers in the most soothing Arts; so many young People who fight under *Cupid's* Banners, so many Husbands exasperated at the Hymeneal Fetters, and Wives unhappily yoked by the Avarice of Friends? In what View do Spectators of this Turn of Mind visit the Theatres? For Instructions which may prompt 'em to Evil, Examples that may confirm them in their Crimes; for lascivious Food wherewith to nourish the Eye, or fictitious Love-Adventures, which may awake in their Remembrance those they themselves were really engaged in.

Since then such is the Character of the Spectators who are to be diverted, are we to wonder that dramatic Poets write in a licentious Taste, and that Actors represent them in such a Light! Is not the Audience therefore to be accused for the Licentiousness of both Writers and Players? Certainly, in like Manner as we justly blame Persons of a vitiated Taste for those Viands which are set before them; Viands not seasoned in a natural wholesome Way, but depraved merely to please their Palates.

But

tamen spectatorum ea pars est optima, vel minime mala. Sunt alii (neque illi numero infrequentes) sunt qui alias in scenâ quærant illecebras, alios ludos, alia oblectamenta.

Quorsum enim ad Theatra convolant tot pueri indulgentiâ paternâ corrupti, tot puellæ maternâ disciplinâ ad blanditias condocesactæ, tot juvenes in castris Cupidinis militantes, tot viri irato bymenæo conjugati, tot fæminæ avaritiâ pronubâ malè collocatæ? Quid spectatores isti, quid istæ spectatrices aucupantur, & expetunt in Theatro; nisi vel documenta, quibus erudiantur ad nequitiam; vel exempla, quibus confirmantur in flagitio; vel pabula libidiosa, quibus pascantur oculi; vel figmenta amatoria, in quibus recognoscantur veri amores, & quæ à fictione ad veritatem tacitâ cogitatione revocentur?

Cum autem in Theatrâli scenâ pascendi sint & reficiendi spectatores id genus, quid mirum vel Auctores ea proponere dramata, quæ scripta sint ad morum licentiam, vel Actores ea licenter agere? Aut quid vereamur utriusque licentiæ culpam in spectatores refundere? Quemadmodum rectè quibusdam vitiati palati hominibus imputamus, quòd ipsis apponantur fercula non condita ad sinceritatem saporis, sed corrupta ad gulæ voluptatem.

Sint

But suppose there should now be dramatic Writers (since such have been) who are spontaneously delirious in their Writings, and Actors lascivious from Nature in their Representations; yet does this excuse the Spectators? Are they not rather to be blamed for tolerating them? Is it not the Duty of the Audience to censure the Frenzy of the Poet, and to chastise the Immodesty of the Player? And since the Spectators assume to themselves a Right of censuring the Errors or Faults, whether of the Poem or of the Action, (tho' they frequently are very indifferent Judges of either) why don't they extend their Prerogative to such Particulars as relate to Morality, in which they ought to be, and generally are, more knowing? If the Poet has struck out a lame Verse, or the Player is inexpressive or unnatural in his Action, immediately a general Hiss arises; but why don't the Spectators exert their Raillery against loose Ideas? Why is no Notice taken of an indecent Gesture? Would it derogate from their good Sense to imitate the noble Severity of the *Athenians*, who hearing Riches applauded in the Theatre, and pronounced the supreme Good, were fired with so glorious an Indignation, that not waiting for the Censure and Punishment of so depraved a Doctrine, which was to follow immediately after, *they rose unanimously from their Seats, with a firm Resolution to suppress the * Poem,*

* Seneca Epist. 115.

and

Sint tamen (quoniam esse possunt, & reipsa extiterunt) sint Auctores, qui sponte sua inscribendo insaniant: sint Actores, qui ultro & per se in repræsentando lasciviant: an ideò se positos extra culpam arbitrabuntur Spectatores, qui utrosque placide ferunt? Nonne Spectatorum est, & coarguere Auctorum insaniam, & Actorum lasciviam castigare? Qui sibi hoc juris vindicant in iis, quæ pertinent ad Poëticam, vel Histrioniam, cujus sunt sæpè rudes, cur non utuntur jure suo in iis, quæ spectant ad morum disciplinam, cujus debent esse, & vulgo sunt multò magis intelligentes: Si quis Poëta claudicat in versu, si quis Actor offendit in gestu, continuò sibilus vel clamor ex omnibus amphitheatri partibus tollitur. Cur non reclamatur item in sententiâ Poëtæ libidinosa? Cur in actione histrionis inverecunda fletur? An pudor est imitari pulchram Atheniensium severitatem, qui cùm audirent laudari in Theatro divitias, & in iis summi boni rationem constitui, tantâ exarserunt indignatione, ut non expectatâ, quæ mox sequebatur, pravae doctrinae censurâ & poenâ, subito * ad ejiciendum & Actorem & carmen omnes uno impetu confurrexerint? An Gal-

* Senecæ Epist. 115.

and banish the Player. Now does it become us who are *Frenchmen* and *Christians*, to be less inflamed against Vice than the *Athenians*? Ought we not rather to brand with a like Freedom, the pernicious Instructions of the theatric School?

Some one will possibly object, that Youth is made for Folly, and Age for Wisdom; but why do we not immediately cry aloud, Away with these detestable Principles! Folly does not become any Age. We are born to Wisdom, and 'tis our Duty to listen, in every Season of Life, to her sacred Inspirations.

Should any one teach, that Love is not to be resisted, upon Pretence that Nature and Fate compel us to that Passion, ought not this to be our answer? Begone with thy poisonous Doctrine! We don't allow that Fate compels to sin. Free from our Birth, we love, we sin with Liberty and Freedom.

Should any one envy the Lot of untortured Brutes, who free from the Stings of Conscience, are permitted to indulge their Appetites; shall we not cry aloud, Fly hence with thy impure Wishes! Let us leave Brutes to their brutal Inclinations. As for our selves, we are Men, and pleased with our Rank in the Scale of Beings, are conscious of our Dignity, and would not derogate from it.

Did the Audience inveigh with Vehemence against these and such like Tenets of the voluptuous School, would the Poets dare to force them upon us, disguised in so vast a Variety of
of

los cives & Christianos in redarguendo flagitioso carmine decet esse civibus Atticis remissiores? Cur non pari libertate improba Scholæ scenicæ documenta retundimus?

Cantat aliquis despiendum in juventute; sapientiam senectuti reponendam. Quin exclamamus illico? Apage te cum tuâ nefariâ disciplinâ. Nulla ætas debetur insanîæ. Nasci-mur ad sapientiam; semper sapere decet, numquam licet desipere.

Docet aliquis non repugnandum amorî, quoniam ad illum naturæ lege, & quadam fati necessitate trahimur. Quin respondemus? Amove te cum tuâ pestiferâ doctrinâ. Nullam agnoscimus undecumque natam peccandi necessitatem; liberi sumus; amamus libere; & libere delinquimus.

Invidet aliquis brutorum animantium sortem, quibus sine pœnitentia licet suis cupiditatibus indulgere. Quin vociferamur? Faceſſe procul cum tuo voto impurissimo. Brutis relinquatur quod brutum est. Homines sumus, nec pœnitet esse; humanæ conditionis dignitatem agnoscimus, nec abdicamus.

In his aliisque voluptariæ Scholæ placitis, si validè reclamaretur à Spectatoribus, an ea nobis obtruderent Auctores sexcentis interpolata modis?

of Dresses? Would the Actors pronounce them with numberless new and destructive Graces? Certainly our Poets would retouch their dramatic Pieces, our Players would restrain the Indecency of their Action, and both would chuse to please and improve (when this would be for their Reputation as well as Interest) rather than displease and injure us, should such a Conduct be attended with Ignominy and Ruin.

'Tis therefore chiefly your Duty, ye Spectators, since 'tis in your Power to make both the Poet and Actor virtuous on the Stage, to endeavour at its Reformation. The Depravity of the Theatre is owing to your Indulgence, let therefore your Severity reform it. By your Care, that School may form the Mind to Virtue, which by your Connivance is become a School of Vice. Let not Poets bring on any Piece which a chaste Ear may be afraid of hearing; let not Players exert themselves in any Gesture which may put Modesty to the Blush. Let not the Stage, which is naturally innocent, contribute by the Guilt of those concerned in it, to the Destruction of Souls. This your Country, this your Religion requires; and if Theatres are to be allowed in a Christian Nation, let 'em be such as are worthy virtuous of Men and Christians.

FINIS.



is? An ea nobis Actores recitarent novis usque
 & usque mollita corruptelis? Nonne sua recude-
 rent alteri carmina? Nonne suam alteri re-
 fringerent actionem? Non mallent utrique no-
 bis placere & prodesse cum suo lucro & bonâ
 famâ, quàm displicere & nocere cum suo dam-
 no & infamiâ?

Vestrum est igitur, Spectatores, (quoniam &
 Auctoribus probè scribendi, & Actoribus probè
 agendi legem ponere censurâ vestrâ potestis) ve-
 strum est in primis & præ cæteris emendando
 Theatro curam impendere. Corrigatur vestrâ
 severitate, quod indulgentiâ vestrâ depravatum
 est. Per vos fiat idonea virtuti Schola, quæ
 propter vos facta est apta nequitiae officina.
 Prohibete ne quid Auctores in scenam proferant,
 quod sit castis auribus reformidandum. Cavete
 ne quid Actores in actione scenicâ præ se ferant,
 quod sit frontibus verecundis erubescendum.
 Providete, ne scena, quæ naturâ suâ innocens
 est, alieno scelere fiat nocens, & animarum rea.
 Date hoc patriæ, date hoc Religioni, ut si quod
 in republicâ Christianâ habendum est Theatri
 spectaculum, illud & bono cive, & homine
 Christiano dignum habeamus.

Dixi.

BOOKS printed for C. DAVIES
and A. LYON.

I. **T**HE History of *Charles XII.* King of *Sweden.*
By *Mr. De Voltaire.* Translated from the
French. With his Effigies engraved by *Mr. Vertue.* 12^o.

II. **L**ETTERS concerning the *ENGLISH NATION.*
By *Mr. De Voltaire.*

III. **P**hilosophical Conversations; or a compleat Sy-
stem of Natural Philosophy, by way of Dialogue, with
89 Copper Plates. Written in *French* by *Father Reg-*
nault, of the Society of *Jesus.* Translated into *English,*
illustrated with Notes, by *Tho. Dale,* M. D. 3 Vol.
8vo.

N. B. The Design of this Author is, like that of
Mr. Fontenelle in his *Plurality of Worlds,* to render
Natural Philosophy no less plain to the meanest Reader,
than entertaining to the brightest; at the same Time
his Reasoning is founded upon such Experiments as
have employed the Speculation of the greatest Philoso-
phers in different Countries that this last Age has pro-
duced, particularly upon those in the *German Epheme-*
rides, the *French Journals,* and the *Royal Academy of*
Sciences.

IV. **S**pectacle de la *Nature.* Or Nature display'd,
Being Discourses on such Particulars of natural History
as were thought most proper to excite the Curiosity,
and form the Minds of Youth. Illustrated with Cop-
per Plates. Translated from the *French.*

N. B. The Author has herein explain'd, with great
Wit and Beauty, the most curious Particulars in Na-
ture relating to Terrestrial Animals, Birds, Insects,
Fishes and Plants. If I might be allow'd to judge of
the Success of this Book, from the Pleasure which
the Reading of it gave me, I should pronounce it very
great. 'Twas at my Request, and in Compliance
with my most earnest Solicitation, that the Author
undertook this Work, &c. Vide *Mr. Rollin's Preface*
to his History of the *Egyptians, Carthaginians, &c.*
Vol. IV.

